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The History of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church



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THE HISTORY OF
BETHEL
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH

BY
ROBERT C. CARPENTER

Written and Published For
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FOREWORD

When I agreed to write the history of Bethel Church, I suspected it would take some extra time from regular home activities. I did not expect for the task to be so complicated and for my own interest to be so heightened. I have spent countless days and nights working to complete the project. I have written and called numerous persons and institutions seeking data. I made a number of research trips in order to enhance my knowledge. I am hopeful that this book will effectively tell the story of the congregation which came to be called Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church. I only regret that I could not gain more information about certain periods in our history.

A book of this magnitude is not possible without help from many individuals. First, I wish to thank the Celebration Committee - Hub Sellers, Annie Lee Paysour, and Diane K. Carpenter. They proofread much of my manuscript and gave me advice. I especially appreciate Diane Carpenter who also assisted with the Appendix and the Photography Section, and who gave needed advice. Ann Dellinger proofread the manuscript, assisted with research, and gave me advice. Sue Sellers also proofread the manuscript. Sue Carpenter, my wife, assisted by proofreading, by doing the calligraphy, and by being so patient with me as I worked on the project. The following persons assisted by helping with research and by allowing me to utilize their private documents: James Pasour, Sarah Watts, Mrs. Wade Carpenter Sr., Wade Carpenter Jr., Mrs. Eleanor Friday, Raymond L. Paysour, and others. James Pasour has been especially helpful by getting sources and photographs for me. The following libraries and document collections allowed me to use their facilities and were helpful in my project: Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Lutheran Southern Seminary, N. C. Department of Archives and History, Southern Historical Collection, Perkins Library at Duke University, and the Lutheran Archives at Salisbury. I especially appreciate the Synod House for their cooperativeness and for allowing Bethel to use the pictures in the Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers. Many thanks to Wanda K. Huffstetler for taking pictures to be included in the Photography Section. To all other church members and friends who have given time, advice, or material to this project, I want to express my appreciation.

I organized the book into chapters and placed footnotes at the end of each chapter. Invariably there will be mistakes. I apologize for any mistakes or incomplete data. I utilized written sources whenever possible. Unfortunately many details are often omitted from such written sources. Interviews were conducted by myself and other members of the Celebration Committee. Hopefully their contents will enlighten the book. Occasionally a person's name may be spelled differently. I attempted to spell all names accurately, but since I used written sources various church writers spelled these names differently. Please excuse any of these errors.

Finally I want to thank Donna and Tony Baker for typing the manuscript and preparing it for the printer. Without their valuable expertise this book could not be possible. Thanks to Ron Mahannah of American Graphics for professionally preparing this book. To Bethel Church Council and the membership for supporting the project and making it possible, I thank you. Especially to my wife Sue and children, Michael, Marcus, and Candace: Thanks for allowing me the time to complete this book. Your understanding has made it possible.

It is my hope that you will enjoy The History of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church. I want to dedicate it to the Glory of God and to our Christian Heritage. May God continue to Bless Bethel and its members.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church is the history of people. It is a look at their faith, their failings, their strengths, and their weaknesses. It is the story of continual striving for a better religious life. It is the story of logs, frame planks, brick, and metal. It is the story of shared religious homes, of burned churches, of meeting in homes, of self-sufficiency, and of a new church. The history of Bethel is the story of Sunday Schools, Bible Schools, Children's Day, organs, and pianos. It is the story of synodical breaks and synodical unions. But more than any thing else the history of Bethel Church is the story of its people.

Ed Harmon characterized Bethel Church thusly: "My daddy always said, 'the best people in the world are at Bethel,' and they still are."¹ Ed Harmon is a life-long member of Bethel whose roots run deep. He recalled two world wars, synod changes, different pastors, and various lay leadership. But for Ed Harmon the factor which remains constant is the people of Bethel Church.

As one reads the history of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, one may consider Ed Harmon's statement. For 200 years the people of Bethel have experienced trials and tests to their faith. The congregation began as a small group of Germans meeting together. Through the years synodical divisions created stress for the congregation. By remaining steadfast in their faith the membership of Bethel prevailed. Following years of sharing a church the people of Bethel secured their own land and their own church. The congregation put God first and was blessed with four sons of the church who would become ministers. The people of Bethel refused to allow fire to destroy their congregation. Twice in their history they re-built places of worship destroyed by fire. With faith the people of Bethel allowed modernization to enter their rural community. They flourished to the point that they chose to become a self-sufficient church with its own pastor and parsonage. The winds of change challenged the people of Bethel to embark upon a building program which would provide an educational building, a fellowship hall, and a new sanctuary. As the membership prepares to celebrate its 200th anniversary, it eagerly anticipates the completion of the building program.

God has provided many blessings upon the people of Bethel. The reader may observe how Bethel congregation was able to overcome adversity and focus upon God's priorities. Observe with Ed Harmon the people of Bethel, "the best people in the world."

1 Interview of Ed Harmon by the author on December 28, 1989.

Chapter 1

GERMAN SETTLERS AND THE LITTLE MOUNTAIN MEETING HOUSE

The history of the congregation which now calls itself Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church has its earliest roots in an amazing period of change which occurred in Western Europe during the 1500's and the 1600's. It was during these years that the entire social, economic, and religious systems of the Europeans changed irrevokably. European life during these years experienced changes in many facets.

Prior to these years of change, Europeans - Germans, French, Swiss, English - knew their place in the world. They knew who the richest landlords would be; they knew that if they were laborers or serfs they could never expect to have any better life. They worshipped in the Roman Catholic Church, and the word of the pope was infallible. Life for most people was uncontrollable and hard. People could labor all their life and never accumulate any material resources which they could pass on to their children. Most people actually lived to die so they could go to heaven and a life considerably better than the one known on earth. But during these years of change, Europeans found that many of the truths they had taken for granted were no longer to be accepted.

The dawn of the Industrial Revolution brought opportunities for a better life for some people in the cities. Serfs who had previously been tied to the landlord's property found that by possessing a skill they could move from the land into the city and could accumulate some wealth. The 16th and 17th Centuries were also periods of turmoil which disrupted the earlier ways of doing things. During these years France and England emerged as nations with people who were united. Economic and political pressures caused wars in Europe. Alliances between leaders of countries caused war to be waged over much of Germany and France. These wars created additional hardships on the people.

As pressures were changing the ways people thought of themselves socially,

politically, and economically, questions were raised about the religious practices of the day. It was Martin Luther who first broke with the Roman Catholic Church. He influenced many Germans who had previously accepted the practices of the Catholic Church. Other leaders soon created additional religious movements. John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli influenced other Swiss, German, English, French, and Scottish people. The Reformation caused Europeans to think differently about religion and its place in their lives.

A final factor changed the way Europeans viewed their future. Most Europeans felt no influence from the discovery and exploration of America through this period. But by the early 1700's word reached the people of Europe: Come to America and start life anew. Prior to this time people had been trapped in a social and economic system which doomed them to a meager existence. All of a sudden, newspapers, pamphlets, and advertisements told the people that no matter how difficult their current life they could find a better life in the New World. Germans and Swiss were told of Pennsylvania, a land where they could freely practice their own religious beliefs, could accumulate some material wealth, and would not be judged by their past poverty or social status.

With the hope that Pennsylvania provided, German-speaking peoples came to America in vast numbers. They came from the German states along the Rhine River known as the Palatinate or the Rhine-Pfalz. They came from Switzerland and Austria. German refugees living in the Netherlands and in England came to America. Some came with only the clothes on their back. Some could not even pay their passage and agreed to come with the understanding that they would be sold as indentured servants. Some came solely for religious reasons. Many were Lutheran, others were German Reformed. Still others were fewer in number but exerted great influence when they arrived. Some were Mennonites, Moravians, Amish, and Dunkards. These minority sects often settled in close-knit groups and in organized communities. The flood of immigrants filled up the frontier of Pennsylvania. By the mid-1700's Pennsylvania Germans, who were called Pennsylvania Dutch, began to slip southward into Maryland, Virginia, and into North Carolina.¹

By the 1740's and 1750's Germans had found their way west of the Catawba River into what is now called Gaston and Lincoln Counties. Some pioneering German-speaking former Pennsylvania residents had even followed the South Fork River and its tributaries into the area surrounding present Bethel Lutheran

Church. The earliest Germans settling along Beaverdam and Indian Creeks were the Eckers (Eakers) - Peter and Christian; the Zimmermans (Carpenters) - Hans, Christian, Jacob, and Peter; Lawrence Kayser (Kiser); Michael Rudisili (Rudisill); Johann Dietrich Bohm (Beam); Valentine Muni (Mauney). Other Germans settled near the twin hills which are now called Pasour Mountain: Jacob Muni (Mauney); George Bashore or Bosharr (Pasour); Leonard Safferet. Other Germans settled closer to the tributaries of Long Creek: William Froneberger; Christian Muni (Mauney); the Hochstetters (Huffstetlers) - Michael, John, and Jacob; Adam and George Deck; George Sellers. Soon these earliest pioneers were followed by other Germans: Peter Mastetter (Mosteller) lived at present Long Shoals; Conrad Weber (Weaver) lived on Indian Creek next to Jacob and Peter Blanck (Plonk); Frederick Aderholdt bought property on Beaverdam Creek. All these early pioneers had in common the desire for a better life and all undoubtedly wanted to promote their religious beliefs.²

Records do not tell the researcher the religious affiliation of all the German settlers. The few records which have survived suggest that the early Germans brought their religious beliefs with them. They worshipped together probably without ministers or certainly worshipped with any travelling minister who might come by. During these early years the Germans would go to hear a minister regardless of his religious affiliation. The most important thing would be if the minister spoke in their native German, be they Reformed, Moravian, or Lutheran. The scarce records which have survived suggest that the earliest minister to the Germans of the Bethel community was German Reformed.³

On April 16, 1765, John Frederick Doubber (also spelled Doubbert) received a land grant for 200 acres on Beaverdam Creek. On Sept. 26, 1766, he received an additional grant for 300 acres. Both properties were located next to the of the Carpenters, Kisers, and Eakers. On July 22, 1769, Thomas and Anna Welch deeded 300 acres to Doubber on the north side of Beaverdam Creek. In later records Doubber/Doubbert was referred to as Reverend and as a Minister of the Gospel. In early Reformed church histories a Rev. Du Pert was mentioned as having preached to the Germans west of the Catawba River as early as 1764. He was later mentioned as residing near "Paysour's Mill" and that he preached at a church in present Gaston County which burned during the Revolutionary War. This church was supposed to have been located at the gap of Pasour Mountain. Apparently by 1778 Rev. John Frederick Doubber/Doubbert had removed from North Carolina to serve Reformed churches in the Camden District of South Carolina. It would appear reasonably certain that during the twelve or so years

that he resided on Beaverdam Creek he served his neighbors. He probably performed baptisms, marriages, and preached funerals. He probably performed the Lord's Supper to Lutherans and Reformed alike. Most certainly he established a church at the gap of Pasour Mountain which would be the first location of the church whose congregation became Bethel.⁴

Whether Rev. John Frederick Doubbert was the most influencial early religious person in the Bethel community cannot be determined. He certainly did exhibit leadership and performed a service to the community. One researcher has suggested that a settler in the community may have also been a religious leader. Through her research, Mrs. Suzanne Mosteller Rolland suggests that the Hans Zimmerman who lived on Beaverdam Creek is the same person who was described in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania as the leader of the "New Mooners" religious sect. The New Mooners were a very small group who had prayer and worship on the first day of the new moon. They used the Bible as their guide for the services. They believed that prayers at this time would be more likely answered. They further believed that the lunar cycle controlled the disposition of the souls of deceased persons. Hans Zimmerman of Cocalico Township in Lancaster County was described as the high priest of the New Mooners. He held services at his home. At one gathering the audience was made up of mostly Mennonite, Dunkers, and seceders from the Mennonites. They were described as "bearded men". The New Mooners were never a large group and later assimilated into other religious groups. Mrs. Rolland believes that Hans Zimmerman left Pennsylvania and removed to North Carolina and that he may have continued to exert religious leadership among his neighbors in the Bethel community. Whether her supposition can be proven or not, her research indicates that our German forbears were searching for religious outlets and if no minister could attend to them then lay leaders would assume the leadership.⁵

It is very probable that Hans Zimmerman whose home overlooked Beaverdam Creek met Rev. John Frederick Doubbert. They lived only about three miles apart. Hans may have even attended services at the little church at the gap of Pasour Mountain. Since the church was in existence before the Revolution, one can only speculate whether travelling Lutheran ministers may have also visited it. When Rev. Johann Gottfried Arends (Arndt) visited the area west of the Catawba in 1776, it is possible that he preached at the little church. Rev. Arends was the first Lutheran minister ordained in North Carolina. He visited the Germans west of the Catawba sporatically until 1785 when he moved near present Lincolnton and became permanent minister to the Lutherans here. He

visited Beaverdam Lutheran (Now St. Marks) on April 16, 1786. He visited "BieverDam" again on December 4, 1791. No records exist to pinpoint the exact date that Arends began preaching at the church at the mountain. It could have been as early as 1786. Historians have placed the date for his regular services as 1790.⁶

Very little is known about the little church at the gap of Pasour Mountain. No known records of services have been discovered. Only scant recordings of ministers have survived. One source gives us a very grief insight: "An early church stood here and was burned down and never rebuilt."⁷ Another source stated that the church was a union church where both Lutheran and Reformed ministers preached. The Rev. John Frederick Doubbert lived nearby and preached there. It "burned during the Revolutionary War."⁸ If the church parishioners gave it a name, it has not been located in this historical study. Mr. Augustus B. Kiser, author of the first History of Bethel Church, spoke of the first church thusly: It "was built of logs, was located on the west side of the old Dallas-Cherryville road on the first knoll north of the 'gap' of Pasour's Mountain."⁹

So the location of the first church building of the congregation now known as Bethel Lutheran Church is on the present day (1990) property of the family of Don Pasour. At least three sources locate the church on the left of present Highway 279, the Dallas-Cherryville Highway, as one travels north from Dallas, just after passing through the gap of Pasour Mountain.¹⁰ Writers of earlier histories recall that a cemetery marked the location of the early church. In 1915 the graveyard was visible in the woods. An early settler, George Pasour (Bashore or Bosshaar in German) was buried in the graveyard in an unmarked grave which Hoffman author of OUR KIN visited. Yet, in 1952 Ruth Rhyne McCall reported that the trees had been cleared "and was planted in an orchard". She suggested the cemetery be restored which indicates that some graves may have still been visible at that time.¹¹ Currently a large marble monument stands on the site to honor the burial spot of George Pasour Sr. The graveyard itself has been destroyed so that no evidence of its existence is visible (1990).

While the above mentioned sources document the existence of the little church at the gap of the mountain, no contemporary source had been examined which discussed the existence of the church. The author finally located such a source. The source dealt with the repair of roads and was located at the State Archives in Raleigh, filed under Road Records. Prior to the existence of a paid highway maintenance operation, the local court would require local residents to

build and repair roads. It was taxation by labor. During the April Sessions of 1803 the Court appointed overseers to a road which ran from Lincolnton to the South Carolina line. The first part of the road ran from Lincolnton to Long Shoals. Its overseer, the person in charge of getting citizens to repair the road, was George Rush. The second leg of the road ran from "Long Shoal to the little mountain-meetinghouse". It was listed as out of repair, and John Carpenter was appointed overseer. The third leg of the road ran "from the Little mountain-meetinghouse to Jno. Whitsides." Its overseer was "John Hoyls". The final part of the road ran from Whitesides to the "South line", and William Price was appointed overseer.¹²

The road mentioned is most certainly the one referred to in the records as the Yorkville Road. It ran from Lincolnton to York, South Carolina. The road itself is very important to our study because it ran beside all three sites of the churches which served the Bethel congregation. It parallels the current Long Shoals Road from Beaverdam Creek to its intersection with the Dallas-Cherryville Highway. The old roadbed is clearly visible behind the residence of the author and his father O. Claude Carpenter. It is also clearly visible near the residence of the late Marion Best. The old Yorkville Road did not cross the South Fork River at Long Shoals but rather at Laboratory. So, the road passed by the current site of Bethel Church, by the present Landers Chapel Church (our church's second location), and by the church in the gap of the mountain.¹³

The Road Record gave our church a name - Little Mountain Meetinghouse. This is the first and only record of a name to the little church. One might question the name. During these early years the twin peaks of Pasour Mountain were called by various names. They were referred to as LaBoon Mountain, after an early settler, and as Little Mountain. Later they were called Pasour Mountain, after George Pasour and his family who owned land on its eastern slopes. From the record there can be no doubt that the Little Mountain Meetinghouse is the Lutheran and Reformed Church at the gap of Pasour Mountain. It is not known whether the name is one given it by outside observers or whether the members of the church also called it Little Mountain Meetinghouse. Outside observers described the church in relation to its geographical surroundings. It is unknown whether the parishioners would name it thusly.

A second point can be made. A church building existed in 1803. One source previously given stated that the church at the gap of the mountain had burned during the Revolution and was never rebuilt. The Road Record proves that a church existed at the site in 1803. If the church did burn during the Revolu-

tion, it had been rebuilt on the site. The term Meetinghouse indicates that it was a church but without exclusive denominational ties. Both Reformed and Lutheran could have had services at a meetinghouse. In fact Baptist and Methodist could have also used the building for services. Researchers had believed that the church had existed past 1812 because George Pasour Sr. did not die until after that time, but they could not reconcile the source which said the church had burned during the Revolution and had not been rebuilt.¹⁴ The existence of the Road Record proves that a church building existed in 1803 and some years afterward.

The year 1803 was important also to North Carolina Lutherans. It was the year the North Carolina Lutheran Synod was formed. Rev. Johann Gottfried Arends (Arndt), the pastor at Little Mountain, was elected its first president. But Rev. Carl Storch reported in 1803 that the churches west of the Catawba were without a minister since Rev. Arndt had "become totally blind. It [was] a sad calamity for that good man and the churches." Rev. Arnold Roschen had earlier reported that Arndt was "formerly a catechet, now a preacher, possesses two fine plantations, is wealthy, and edifies his people by his life and conduct." His blindness and his age diminished the vigor of Arends to such a point that on March 5, 1804 Rev. Paul Henkel received a letter from congregations in Lincoln County requesting that Henkel's son Philip serve them. Philip Henkel was not yet ordained, and Paul insisted that his son remain a licentiate. The following year the request for Philip Henkel to assist Arndt's churches in Lincoln County was repeated. After he was ordained in 1805 by the North Carolina Synod, Rev. Philip Henkel did remove to Lincoln County to assist the aged Arndt. When Arndt died, Rev. Philip Henkel became the fulltime pastor of the Lincoln County churches, which included the Little Mountain church. It is assumed that the Little Mountain Church was involved in petitioning for Philip Henkel. Henkel is recorded as the second minister of our congregation.¹⁵

Rev. Philip Henkel served the Lincoln County congregations well. He gave needed leadership after the decease of the legend, Rev. Arndt. Ministers during this period wore "black clothes and collar, but mostly without a gown . . ." They even reported that in winter they preached in their overcoat. In 1806 Rev. Paul Henkel reported that Philip served eight or nine churches in Lincoln County. Some were "quite large" and all had houses of worship. In 1810 his pastorate was described as including St. Johns, Old Church, School-House, Kasner's, Lebanon, Emanuels, Hebron, and Zion's. Even though our church was not listed, it does not mean that Henkel did not serve it. Other sources list that Henkel

served our congregation until 1814. It was during his ministry that the first land deed for our congregation was recorded. On September 18, 1814, John Fronebarger Sen. deeded two acres of land to "Adam Deck and George Sellers and their Successors as Trustees of the German Lutheran and Reformed Church at Long creek." Payment was one dollar for the land located on "the South side of the Shoal Branch of Long Creek." A spring was mentioned as being on the property.¹⁶ The exact location of this land has not been ascertained. It was assumed for some time that this property was identical to the Little Mountain Church land at the gap of the mountain. This assumption has not been confirmed. It is also not known whether a church was constructed on this land after the date of the deed. Whatever our congregation called itself before 1814 may be uncertain, but with the deed there is proof that the people called it Long Creek Congregation after that time.

On Sunday June 11, 1814, David Henkel, brother of Rev. Philip, preached "At Longcreek." He had received "authority from two pastors to labor as catechist" prior to the North Carolina Synod meeting of the third Sunday in October in 1813. He was allowed to work in Lincoln County. His status was continued in the 1814 Synod meeting. After 1814 David Henkel, young man though he was, took over the parishes served by his brother Philip.¹⁷ David Henkel was to serve as the religious leader for the Long Creek Congregation for the next 15 years.

1 Background information about European influences was gained from the author's own historical knowledge and from The Lecture by Dr. Raymond Bost at Our Savior Lutheran, Dallas, N. C., on October 8, 1989 and attended by the author. Dr. Bost is currently professor of church history at Newberry College, Newberry, S. C.

2 Robert C. Carpenter, Carpenters A Plenty, (Baltimore, Md.: Gateway Press Inc., 1982), pp. 14-20. Another good source for early settlers in this area is Lorena S. Eaker, The Shoe Cobblers Kin, Vol. I (Baltimore, Md.: Gateway Press Inc., 1976). CAP hereafter represents Carpenters A Plenty.

3 Dr. Bost Lecture, Oct. 8, 1989.

4 Philip Leonard, "Rev. John Frederick Dubbert", (Unpublished manuscript located in both Gaston and Lincoln County Library North Carolina Rooms). CAP, pp. 14-20.

5 Correspondence of Mrs. Suzanne Mosteller Rolland of 441 Lakeshore Dr., Atlanta, Ga. to the author, September 2, 1987.

6 Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers, "The Reverend Johann Gottfried Arends", (Columbia, S. C. : The State Printing Co. 1966), pp. 9-12. "Johann Gottfried Arends Diary & Ledger", Original in German and Typescript translation

by Dietrich Leipolz 1964-65, Lutheran Archives, Lutheran Synod House, Salisbury, N. C.

7 L. M. Hoffman, Our Kin, (1915, reprinted by Gaston County Historical Society by Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Pub. Co. 1968), p. 408.

8 Leonard, "Doubbert" quotes Rev. G. William Welker who wrote a sketch on the German Reformed for the Colonial Records of North Carolina.

9 Augustus B. Kiser, "Bethel Lutheran Church", (Unpublished manuscript located at Bethel Church and by Mr. Clyde Kiser of Bessemer City). This article forms the basis for the history of the church. It is also printed in Clyde V. and Alna L. Kiser, ed., Kiser-Carpenter Chronicle, (Privately Pub. Bessemer City, N. C.: 1983), pp. 133-136. It was first printed in Gaston Gazette, October 5, 1946, Section 3, p. 35, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the founding of Gaston County. Almost the same history appears in Bethel Lutheran Churchbook I as "History of Bethel Church, By Mrs. D. C. Kiser", in Record of Interesting and Important Events.

10 Hoffman, Our Kin, p. 408. Leonard, "Doubbert". Kiser, "Bethel".

11 Hoffman, Our Kin, p. 408. Ruth Rhyne McCall, Our Heritage, (1953), pp. 92-93.

12 "April Sessions 1803", file 1781-1809, Road Records, ND, 1781-1822, CR 060.925.2, Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

13 CAP traces the Yorkville Road on the map on p. 16-17, see also p. 444 for a discussion of the 1810 improvement of the road.

14 Leonard, "Doubbert".

15 Rev. William J. Finck trans., A Chronological Life of Paul Henkel, (New Market, Va. 1935-37, repr. 1957), p. 50. Life Sketches, pp. 10-12, 91. G. D. Bernheim, History of the German Settlements and of the Lutheran Church In North and South Carolina, (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Book Store, 1872, repr. Spartanburg, S. C.: The Reprint Co., 1972), pp. 333, 348. Kiser, "Bethel".

16 Bernheim, pp. 369, 377. Deed Book 26, p. 393-394, Register of Deeds, Lincoln County Courthouse, Lincolnton, N. C.

17 Rev. F. W. E. Peschau, DD, trans., Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina From 1803-1826, (Newberry, S. C.: Aull & Honseal, Printers. 1894), pp. 20, 23. This book is located at the Lutheran Archives in Salisbury, N. C. Other Minutes are also located there, some in the original German. I examined many of these materials in deciphering out distant past. Rev. L. L. Lohr, Diary of David Henkel 1812-1830, (Typescript copy from the original owned by Elon O. Henkel, New Market, Va., 1915), copy is at Lutheran Archives in Salisbury, N. C.

Chapter 2

REV. DAVID HENKEL AND THE LONG CREEK CONGREGATION

The youthful David Henkel was called to serve the numerous Lutheran churches located west of the Catawba River in what was known as Lincoln County. The Lincoln County charge included churches in present Gaston, Lincoln, and Catawba Counties. David Henkel belonged to a prominent family of Lutheran ministers. His father, Rev. Paul Henkel, served churches in North Carolina and Virginia. Of David's five brothers, four would also become Lutheran ministers.

David became well-educated. His orthodox Lutheranism and his strength of character would serve him well during the next 15 years of service to the Lincoln County charge. Not only would he inspire and lead Lutheran members and churches, but also he would shape the history of Lutheranism in North Carolina and the South.¹ But in 1814 the members of Long Creek Congregation rejoiced to have someone to serve them.

While David Henkel had only two references for having visited Long Creek Congregation in 1814, the year 1815 brought regular visits. On Saturday January 7, he baptized two children at Long Creek. For the next three months he visited Long Creek on the third Saturday. He skipped June but was again at Long Creek on Saturday July 8. On Monday August 28, he baptized one child at Long Creek. He visited the congregation once during each of the last three months of the year. The year 1815 brought the first record that a representative from the little congregation attended the North Carolina Synod. The Synod was held at Emanuel's Lutheran Church in Lincolnton. "Jacob Fronenberger" from "Lang Creek" was listed as the delegate. At this Synod David Henkel came one step closer to becoming an ordained minister by being named a Candidate for ministry.²

The year 1816 was a busy one for Candidate David Henkel. On February 24, he baptized three adults and two infants at Long Creek. He listed that he received \$4.00. On Saturday August 31 he was at Long Creek where he baptized one child. On Monday September 20 he gave a "funeral sermon for Mr. Deck's child", for which he received \$1.00. He visited Long Creek twice in December.

On Thursday December 5, he baptized two infants, and on Monday December 30 he was again at Long Creek.³ The October Synod meeting was anticipated by Henkel because he expected to be ordained a minister. He was not ordained but "was given full power to administer the sacraments in all our churches." The Synod Minutes note that in order to avoid "bitterness from Lincoln" each ministerial student received his license papers with a benediction. This "bitterness from Lincoln, which was beginning to manifest itself" was to form the basis for conflict during the next few years. Rev. Gottlieb Shober, the Moravian who had been ordained a Lutheran minister in 1810, made the motion to allow laying on of hands for candidates.⁴ Shober and Henkel would become great adversaries in the coming years.

During the year of 1817 David Henkel used his new authority to continue to serve the people of Long Creek Congregation. On Thursday May 15, he baptized one infant and one adult. On Saturday the 17th, he administered communion to about 30 at Long Creek. At the same time he "Confirmed 18". This is the first record of a confirmation at the church. Synod had at the last session given him authority to administer the Lord's Supper and to conduct confirmation. On Wednesday December 31, he baptized "Mrs. David Jenkins and her 4 children." It is probable that she was a member of Long Creek.⁵ There is no record of the 30 church members who received communion in May. Membership at the church can only be speculated upon.

The North Carolina Synod met on its appointed time beginning on the third Sunday in October 1817. David Henkel once again hoped to be ordained. He was not ordained but received the same powers as at the last meeting. The Synod made a very important decision by adopting for use the following hymnal: *Gemeinschaftliche Gesangbuch*. The Synod also directed Henkel to visit Lutheran congregations in Tennessee and in Cape Girardeau area of Missouri. But the apparent tranquility of the 1817 session concealed the underlying discontent among the Synod members. Three major issues tended to split the Synod. One involved how Lutherans were to deal with the Great Awakening. Many Lutherans like Carl Storch and Gottlieb Shober, Moravian turned Lutheran, believed that revivals were of no value spiritually. Henkel, his father Paul, and others believed that revivals did provide a way for Christian conversion but not the only way. Secondly, the Pennsylvania Lutheran Synod had invited all Lutherans to attend a General Synod in June 1819 in Baltimore, Maryland. Shober and Storch favored attendance, while David Henkel questioned its value. A third contention involved doctrinal issues. Henkel was charged with teaching falsely by non-Lutherans

and by Gottlieb Shober. Henkel in response accused the North Carolina Synod of deviating from Lutheran doctrine. Finally, yet another issue seemed to emerge at Synod. The issue was David Henkel himself, and personality played a big part. Henkel was a young person, sometimes possessing brashness. But he was also an intensely bright intellectual. He was of slight physical build and had a limp as he walked. He seldom displayed humor. But Henkel possessed leadership qualities which caused his supporters to follow him and his adversaries to fear him.⁶ His dedication to his calling and the vigor with which he displayed it would in the next few years lead to the division of the North Carolina Synod.

In the year 1818 David Henkel continued to serve Long Creek Congregation. On Monday January 19, he baptized one infant for "Isaac Muny". On March 12, he baptized "at and for Jacob Carpenter 3 children and adult." On the 23rd he was at Long Creek and baptized three infants. On April 25 he baptized three infants at Long Creek. On May 30 he baptized three adults and ten infants "At Edward Jenkins". On Saturday August 8 he was again at Long Creek. On Thursday September 3, he was at "Mr. Jacob Muney's, and baptized 5 infants". On Saturday the 12th he was at Long Creek. On November 14 he was at Long Creek and baptized two infants.⁷ The record shows that the church at Long Creek was growing. Not only were infants being baptized, but adults were being baptized and added to the church. Henkel's leadership was a plus for the church.

But as the year 1818 ended, David Henkel's frustration increased. Synod was not held that year. Instead Gottlieb Shober wrote a treatise, LUTHER, which celebrated the anniversary of the Reformation by encouraging participation in the General Synod. In fact he convinced Rev. Carl Storch, president of the Synod, to call a special meeting of Synod in April 1819 so that a delegate could be elected. Storch did so even though the Synod Constitution specifically stated the Synod meeting time to be Trinity Sunday every year. G. D. Bernheim, the Lutheran historian, described the character of the treatise, LUTHER, "on some of its pages to be soundly Lutheran, on other pages compromising and unionistic." Its departure from strict Lutheran doctrine helped to create differences within the Synod. The North Carolina Constitution, which was printed with LUTHER, stated that the regular North Carolina Synod meeting would be on Trinity Sunday. It was "vest gesetzt" or "firmly fixed" on that date.⁸ These events laid the groundwork for conflict. For Henkel another year meant certain ordination.

In 1819 Henkel's Diary is filled with visits to Long Creek Congregation.

He visited the church seven times. He also visited and preached at neighbors. On January 5 he baptized William Jenkins and three of his children. On the following day he "preached at Col. John Roberts" whose home was between present Cherryville and Crouse. On Saturday February 13, he was at Long Creek, and again on March 12 he baptized one infant there. On Monday May 31 he was at Long Creek, again on July 19, and August 13. On Saturday September 25, he baptized one infant there. On Saturday November 20 he baptized two infants.⁹

On April 26, 1819 David Henkel attended the called North Carolina Synod meeting. His father, brother Philip, and associate Joseph E. Bell did not attend because they felt the meeting was unconstitutional. Instead of ordination which he expected, David Henkel was placed on trial. Charges were made against him; He was not following Lutheran doctrine. He had excommunicated Adam Costner, probably a member at Philadelphia (Dallas). He was not promoting good church relations by attacking the practices of Calvinists and revivalists. Finally Andrew Hoyle, a Presbyterian who lived between Dallas and Stanley, accused Henkel of defaming his reputation. The charges of teaching false doctrine were not substantiated. The charge of excommunicating Costner was proven to be true and Adam Costner was restored to the church. The Synod resolved that "other grave violations" had been proven against Henkel. These "violations" were not placed by Shober in the Synod Minutes "in order to preserve peace". Andrew Hoyl contended in his "Memorial" to Synod "that David Henkel had acted Rash against him the said Hoyl and has taken very unfair means to Rob him of his Reputation." Shober wrote in a copy of the Synod minutes that "by a unanimous vote" the accusations were found to be true. Hoyl further accused Henkel of teaching false doctrines which included the interpretation of baptism and regeneration, the role of Christ's body and blood during Communion, the ability of the minister to forgive sins, discouraging Lutherans from marrying outside the church, and his suggestion that a Christian was truly perfect as God. After the vote, David Henkel had his Candidate status revoked, and he received a license as a Catechist for a six-month probationary period. It meant that Henkel could preach but not conduct the Sacraments. If peace would return to his congregations after this time, he would again receive Candidacy status. "With this decision David expressed himself as being satisfied, promised to do better, and according to appearances reconciled himself with Mr. Hoyl." But Henkel felt mistreated and his congregation agreed. The papers which have survived concerning the controversy with Andrew Hoyl add data about our congregation. Two possible members of Long Creek Congregation gave state-

ments. Mary Deck and Barbara Wilson stated that they overheard David Henkel say "he was as righteous as God" while at the home of Moses Wilson. On April 8, 1819, Jacob and Elizabeth Wike stated that Henkel visited their home "on his way from the Mountain Meeting House to Saint Pauls". This reference probably pertains to the Meeting House at Pasour Mountain. Nathan Davis stated that he attended a "night meeting at the house of Edward Jenkins", a possible member of Long Creek, where Henkel preached. The Synod Minutes report that Henkel had far outshined his fellow ministers in recorded ministry. He had baptized 377 infants, three times the closest minister. He had baptized 38 slaves, again three times the other ministers. He had baptized 49 adults, had confirmed 135 persons, and had buried 11.¹⁰ Henkel was effectively ministering to his many congregations. Yet, the action of the North Carolina Synod placed a cloud over the work of David Henkel.

On Trinity Sunday June 6, 1819, David Henkel, his brother Philip, Rev. Daniel Moser, Candidate Joseph E. Bell, and lay representatives met for the regular Synod meeting. The president, Rev. Carl Storch, was not present. Two messengers were sent to find Storch. They returned with this message from Storch: "I am indisposed, and if I were not indisposed, I would not attend; for conference is over, and there is none now depending." He also told his Elders not to open the church doors. Attending this meeting was Isaac Mauney from Long Creek Congregation. On the following day, Rev. Philip Henkel was elected president, and the group conducted business under the shade of oak trees in the yard of Buffalo Creek Church. The delegates voted unanimously that David Henkel be ordained because he was a "zealous preacher of the gospel, a good citizen, and a moral and well informed man; and that the complaints heretofore laid against him, were founded in prejudice. . . ." By the laying on of hands, David Henkel and Joseph E. Bell were ordained under a large oak tree. This "oak tree ordination" was denounced by Gottlieb Shober. He claimed that "[i]n this manner did they separate themselves from us." Henkel and his followers contend ed that the regular North Carolina Synod could only be held on Trinity Sunday, since the Constitution specifically stated that time. Bernheim observed some years later that the "North Carolina Synod should have had more respect for its own legislation at its last meeting, and let 'firmly fixed' remain so, until reconsidered and changed at a regular meeting of synod." The Henkelites also resented that the earlier meeting had been called solely to assign a delegate, Shober, to the General Synod.¹¹ It is not known whether Isaac Mauney truly understood the ramifications of what he had witnessed. It is most probable

that he returned home with the good news that finally their spiritual leader, David Henkel, was an ordained minister.

Following the ordination of Henkel, his congregations quickly came to his defense. In a series of petitions they met and "vindicated" the character of Rev. David Henkel. On January 17, 1820, "The subscribers living near the waters of Beaverdam and Longcreek . . ." signed a petition vouching for the character of Henkel. They were Jacob Aderholt, Michael Rudisill, John Bohm, George Zeller, Philip Zeller, Jacob Froneberger, John Froneberger, John Blackwood Esq., John Froneberger Jr., John Zeller, Henry Zeller, Joshua Roberts, William Froneberger, John Roberts. There is no way to determine which of these persons attended Beaverdam and which attended Long Creek. It is assumed that the Fronebergers and Zellers (Sellers) were members of Long Creek. About this same time "Proposals for building a house of publick worship on or Between the Waters of Beaverdam and Long Creek was written". There is no evidence that the "house of publick worship" described in the above mentioned paper was ever built.¹² While the events of 1819 had changed things for Henkel, the newly ordained minister met 1820 with the vigor to continue his ministry. The year 1820 found Rev. Henkel at Long Creek quite often. On Saturday January 15 he was at Long Creek, and on Saturday March 25 he baptized one infant there. On April 22 he was at Long Creek, and on Tuesday May 23 he baptized two infants there. On Thursday June 29 his father Rev. Paul Henkel accompanied him to Long Creek. Rev. David Henkel gave a "Preparation sermon". On Friday the two "administered the Lord's Supper". On Friday August 11 he was at Long Creek and again on September 19. On Sunday November 12 he was at Long Creek, and on the Monday he "administered the Lord's Supper to 20 persons".¹³ The little congregation appeared to continue to thrive under Henkel's leadership. It appeared to fully support their spiritual leader

While Gottlieb Shober had assumed that the 1819 meeting and "oak tree ordination" had created a division among the North Carolina Lutherans, others including Joseph E. Bell and the Henkels did not "intend to separate" because it would "do much harm". On November 6, 1819, Shober had written Andrew Hoyl. He threatened to publish "the papers and depositions filed at our last Synod". He stated that any "honest man" would certainly conclude that Synod should "have dismissed D[avid] totally". He encouraged Hoyl to "be attentive to the movements of Lyars", and he assured the community that the Lutheran Church would remain "uncontaminated with impurities - of Poposh & Despotic arrogance & pride - and that the ministers of our Church may live up to the Doctrine they preach, and abide in Truth."¹⁴

On May 29, 1820, Synod was held at Emanuels Church in Lincolnton. Reverends Paul, Philip, and David Henkel attended, as did Rev. Daniel Moser and Rev. Joseph E. Bell. Initial discussion concerned past experiences. Shober and his unionist group held a majority of the Synod. They sent a representative to the Henkel contingent. They asked two questions: "Will you withdraw from the Synod?" and "Will you submit to the decision of the majority of the ministers and lay-delegates, relative to the controversies and differences?" Henkel's supporters answered both questions with "no". Henkel's group did not plan to withdraw from the Synod, nor would they be ruled by a majority but wanted to "decide everything according to the teachings of the Augsburg Confession and the Constitution of the Synod. . . ." Following sermons by president Carl Storch and secretary Gottlieb Shober, discussion centered around the constitution. Shober, author of the constitution, took the unusual position of contending that the constitution was written "hurriedly and inconsiderately". Because of its falacies Shober contended that "everything must now be regulated and determined by the majority." The Henkelites responded that the constitution had been written and could not be changed by majority vote. Further discussion centered around doctrinal differences with unionists denying some of the precepts in the Augsburg Confession. Shober had heard enough. He asked, "Whoever is a right Lutheran, let him follow us . . ." to John Harry's Hotel in Lincolnton to continue Synod. One of Henkel's supporters responded that the unionists were fanatics, "Schwarmer", and that they were "no true Lutheran preachers; you are fanatics, and to such you belong." Shober, Storch, and their supporters continued the North Carolina Synod at the hotel. Shober in the Minutes reported that the Henkels "took possession of the church". "To put an end to David's coarseness" Shober said the Synod left the church.¹⁵

The following day David Henkel sent two of his members to attempt reconciliation. He instructed John Abernathy of White Haven and Jacob Aderhold of Beaverdam to inform Synod that if they were prepared to recall their past illegal activities and to adhere to the Constitution that David Henkel would also attend. John Abernathy moved to omit the proceedings at the April 1819 meeting, since the Henkel faction considered it an unconstitutional meeting. The motion failed. Abernathy then moved to ordain David Henkel, which also lost. When Shober suggested that charges existed against David Henkel, Abernathy challenged Synod to try him according to the Constitution. Synod officers rejected this last suggestion. The Henkel faction accused the North Carolina Synod of not following Lutheran practice, not following the constitution, and not adhering to the Augs-

burg Confession. The North Carolina Synod did accept the "oak tree ordination" of Joseph E. Bell, and he rejoined the Synod. Yet, they refused to ordain David Henkel. Shober stated that David Henkel had been "strikingly impolite" and called him a "Dictator". The North Carolina Synod voted to join the General Synod. Since the Henkel faction was not present, there was no real opposition. David Henkel stated that there were four reasons why he, his father, and brother Philip broke with the North Carolina Synod at the Lincolnton meeting. The reasons included the North Carolina Synod's breach of the constitution of 1819; the denial of president Storch and secretary Shober in 1820 that they had a constitution; that they "deviated from the doctrine of the Lutheran church on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper"; and that the North Carolina Synod denied Henkel's ordination while allowing Bell's ordination.¹⁶ The situation was out of hand. The separation which came about at the 1820 meeting gave birth to the Tennessee Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

At the Synod the "Answer to Mr. Hoyle by a Committee of Investigation" was signed by Isaac Mauny. All who signed were listed as citizens of Lincoln County. Jacob Aderhold signed as did John D. Abernathy. It is assumed that Isaac Mauny (variously spelled) was the delegate to Synod from Long Creek, and Aderhold was a delegate from Beaverdam. Their report answered the charges Andrew Hoyle Esq. had made against David Henkel at the April 1819 session. This report, prepared by Henkel supporters, was probably to be presented at the North Carolina Synod. It is doubtful that it was even presented.¹⁷ It is obvious that the members of Long Creek congregation had knowledge of the turmoil which divided the North Carolina Synod.

During July 17-19, 1820, the Henkel faction organized the Tennessee Synod. For the next 25 years our congregation would be associated with the Tennessee Synod. It had been served well by Rev. David Henkel and supported his position in the controversy. It may be assumed that some ordinary members had little knowledge of the Synodical proceedings. They responded in their support of Henkel because of his dedication to them. Bernheim had definite opinions about the Tennessee Synod break. He stated that Rev. Shober "was no Lutheran, he was a member of the Moravian Church, and never disconnected himself from communion with the same. . . ." Bernheim contended that the difficulties were "at first a personal one" which later became embroiled with doctrine. Of Rev. David Henkel he stated that, even though a young man, he was as "decided and unyielding in his opinions" as Shober. "He was a hard student and well educated, not only in the German and English languages . . ." but with Latin, Greek, and

Hebrew. "He was the best informed candidate for the ministry the North Carolina Synod had at that time, and wielded even then a considerable influence. He had a mind that was clear, active and penetrating; he was quick in discerning an advantage, and not slow in making use of it." Bernheim agreed that divisions in the church should be avoided. Yet, he observed that, when a division re-establishes "the pure faith of the Gospel", good can come from it. "Such was the case in this division." Bernheim observed three advantages to the split: It put more emphasis on true Lutheran doctrine in the Tennessee Synod; Lutheran symbols were translated into English through the efforts of the Tennessee Synod; and the Henkel Press printed "more truly Lutheran theological works in an English dress" than any other in America. Socrates Henkel, son of David Henkel, agreed with Bernheim with the exception that he placed more significance to doctrinal differences than to personal differences. Bernheim and Henkel both recognized the negative impact that non-Lutheran ministers had upon the North Carolina Synod. Henkel pointed out that Rev. David Henkel had a Latin and German copy of the Book of Concord, which revealed to Henkel that the North Carolina Synod was moving away from Lutheranism. Rev. Socrates Henkel noted that the "chief object of the organization of [Tennessee] Synod, was the restoration of the Church to its normal condition, in regard to doctrine, practice, and churchliness."¹⁸ Within this context Long Creek Congregation found itself involved in making church history.

With the creation of the Tennessee Synod Rev. David Henkel had yet one more responsibility. In 1821 he did not forget his congregation on Long Creek. On January 1 he was at Long Creek. On Thursday February 8, he was there again and baptized one infant for Jacob Carpenter. On Saturday April 14 he baptized two infants at Long Creek. On May 19 he was at Long Creek. On Saturday August 18 he administered the Lord's Supper at Long Creek. He also "Baptized 3 infants, and 1 infant for Isaac Mauny in the morning and likewise 1 adult Mrs. Froneberger."¹⁹ The congregation continued to grow.

The controversy between the synods still clouded the work of God. On June 17, 1821, the North Carolina Synod concluded not to answer any further accusations made by the Henkels. But when the Tennessee Synod met on October 22, 1821, David Henkel was appointed to write arguments against the General Synod. Henkel did the work of the Lord in a great way: 444 infants baptized, 56 adult baptisms, 69 slave baptisms, and 156 confirmed - all in one year.²⁰ It is hard to believe that Henkel found time for anything but his church work!

The year 1822 brought additional work. On Saturday January 5 Rev. Henkel

baptized one infant for Peter Mauney in the morning. He preached at Long Creek and there also baptized one infant. On the following day in the morning he "celebrate[d] the rite of matrimony between John Kyser and wife." On February 2 he was at Long Creek. On Tuesday May 28 he was at Long Creek. Rev. Adam Miller accompanied Henkel and Miller preached. They "administered the Lord's Supper to a few, yet sincere communicants." On July 20 and August 26 Henkel was at Long Creek. On the fourth Sunday in November Henkel was "at John Fronebergers and baptized 3 infants."²¹ The Tennessee Synod held its meeting on October 21, 1822. The Synod noted that there have been no disruption and disturbances in the churches served by Rev. David Henkel. The same Synod heard a petition from Jacob Aderhold of Beaverdam Church. He requested that a "fit person should be appointed in every congregation, to attend at funeral occasions, in the absence of the ministers" and also wanted rules concerning sponsorship at baptisms to be altered.²² During the 1820's no delegate from Long Creek Congregation attended Synod. There is no known reason why. It may be that the delegate from Beaverdam, which attended most Synod sessions, also represented the smaller congregation of Long Creek.

It was also during the year of 1822 that Rev. David Henkel tried once more to reconcile with the North Carolina Synod. On April 26, 1822, he wrote a conciliatory letter to the North Carolina Synod suggesting that the two groups meet to resolve their differences. He felt peace and unity should be restored for the good of the Christian church. His hopes however were dashed when the North Carolina Synod responded "that D. Henkel is no minister of the Lutheran Church." Peter C. Boger delivered Henkel's letter to North Carolina Synod. He reported that Storch and Shober would not even receive Henkel's letter. Boger stated that Rev. Henkel requested reconciliation by three ways: First a meeting between ministers of both Synods. Secondly, proof should be made as to whether Henkel preached false doctrines or whether Shober and others may have preached falsely. Finally, by debating the constitution of the General Synod it could be determined whether it was based on the Holy Scriptures. On February 1, 1823, Boger questioned the relationship between Shober and the North Carolina Synod with Episcopalians. He questioned how Lutherans could attend Episcopalian conferences and Episcopalians could attend the Lutheran Synod. Earlier on January 1, 1823, Jacob Aderhold of "Beaver-Dam Church, Lincoln County, N. C." wrote Peter C. Boger. In his letter he stated that he could not understand how the North Carolina Lutheran Synod could allow Episcopalians to serve as Lutheran ministers when the Episcopalian Church thought it proper to re-ordain Robert J.

Miller who the North Carolina Synod had earlier ordained.²³ Laymen now appeared to agree with the ministers that a reconciliation seemed impossible. This last failed attempt doomed the two Synods to co-exist until the 1920's.

During the next few years the entries for Long Creek Congregation in David Henkel's Diary appear less frequently. It was during these years that A. B. "Gus" Kiser stated that many members joined Beaverdam Lutheran and the Methodists. He stated that "from 1820 to 1835 was a very dark period for the little church at the Gap of the Mountain." He said that during those years the church burned. He also stated that there was no regular minister, and "its members were gradually joining other churches."²⁴

During this period Rev. David Henkel appears to take responsibility for the congregation but is also less involved. It may be that he has given Long Creek to the young aspiring minister, Adam Miller Jr. On April 6, 1824, Adam Miller Jr., the nephew of Rev. Adam Miller Sr. "was introduced to Synod as an applicant for the office of the Ministry. He was placed under the supervision of his uncle." Adam Miller Jr. was a young man, but he rapidly moved toward ordination as a regular pastor. On September 8, 1825, two petitions from Tennessee requested the ordination of Adam Miller Jr. Synod ordered that he be examined. On September 8, 1826, "Adam Miller Jr., was examined and ordained as pastor . . ." by Synod. He may have ministered to the church at the mountain during this period. Henkel made no mention in his Diary of Long Creek in either 1823 or 1824. But in 1825 on October 18 he was again at Long Creek where he baptized one infant. During these years he continued to serve Beaverdam Church regularly. In 1826 he was at Long Creek on Saturday March 11 where he baptized four infants. On Friday April 14, 1826, he was again at Long Creek. The next day he preached a "funeral sermon for Mrs. Jenkin's son who was killed by a horse". He also baptized three infants. On April 17, 1826, he baptized one child for William Carpenter. On July 1 he was at Long Creek and again on July 22 where he baptized one infant for Christian Acre (Eaker). On Sunday September 3, 1826, he "preached and confirmed 33 persons for Adam Miller Jr." It is not known at what location this occurred. On September 23 he was again at Long Creek. On October 5 he baptized two infants for William Carpenter. Later on Thursday October 19 he was at Long Creek where he baptized one infant. Finally on December 23, 1826, he was at Long Creek.²⁵ The amount of ministry he gave Long Creek in 1826 would indicate that the congregation was in existence and still doing rather well.

During the next four years Rev. David Henkel's service at Long Creek de-

clined. In 1827 he visited Long Creek. On January 26 he was at John Carpenter's where he baptized one adult and two infants. On Saturday March 24 he was again at Long Creek where he baptized two infants. On Saturday June 2 he was at Long Creek and baptized one infant. He recorded no more visits to the church that year. In 1828 he regularly visited Beaverdam Church but made no mention of Long Creek. In 1829 he visited Beaverdam Church a total of ten times but again made no mention of visiting Long Creek congregation. On Saturday November 21, 1829, Rev. Henkel baptized "8 adults and 1 infant for Jacob Kyser." Jacob Kiser lived near present Landers Chapel Church. In 1830 the travel and ministry began to take a toll on Rev. Henkel. He visited Beaverdam during the year but between May 2 and June 5 "did not preach, having been sick". His Diary ends abruptly on August 12, 1830. On that date he preached his last sermon at Philadelphia Church in present Gaston County, and he died on June 15, 1831. He was only 36 years old and had served the Church for 18 years. Henkel had preached over 3,200 sermons, had baptized 2,997 infants and 243 adults, and confirmed 1,105 persons. He preached sometimes two or three times a day "generally to crowded and attentive Congregations" in both German and English. He published at least nine major works, most of which dealt with the major religious issues of the day. "He remained immovable in the doctrines he promulgated to the end of his life. [He] had to endure many trials, crosses and temptations, but he maintained his integrity through them all, trusting to the promises of his Redeemer; and . . . left a bright example to succeeding pilgrims."²⁶ The members of Long Creek would sorely miss their Rev. David Henkel.

1 Life Sketches, p. 90. Dr. Bost Lecture, Oct. 15, 1989.

2 Henkel Diary, 1815. N.C. Synod Minutes, p. 25. Berhandlungen Der Evangelisch Lutherischen Synodal Bersammlung Welche Den 15Ten October, 1815 und Die Folgenden Tage in Lincoln County, N. Carolina an Der Immanuel's Kirche Gehalten Worden, (New Market, 1815), manuscript copy at the Lutheran Archives in Salisbury.

3 Henkel Diary, 1816.

4 N.C. Synod Minutes, pp. 28-29. Bernheim, pp. 375-376; 427.

5 Henkel Diary, 1817. Mrs. David Jenkins was born Nancy Carpenter, see CAP, p. 547.

6 N.C. Synod Minutes, pp. 32-33. Lecture of Dr. Raymond Bost held at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Dallas, N. C. on October 15, 1989 and attended by the author. "Copy of letter to David Henkel from G. Shober, Salem, October 20, 1818," C. L. Coon Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C. describes

some of the doctrinal issues.

7 Henkel Diary, 1818.

8 Dr. Bost Lecture, Oct. 15, 1989. Bernheim, pp. 433-435. Socrates Henkel, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, (New Market, Va.: Henkel & Co., 1890), p. 15.

9 Henkel Diary, 1819.

10 N.C. Synod Minutes, pp. 17, 35-40. Dr. Bost Lecture, Oct. 15, 1989. "Philip Henkel to David Henkel, copy, April 15, 1819" and "Daniel Moser to the Evangelical Lutheran Brethren in Kentucky, copy, April 17, 1825," C. L. Coon Papers, Duke University. David Hinkle (Henkel) Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, N.C. These papers detail the Andrew Hoyl controversy from depositions and statements made in favor of Hoyl. They provide great insight into their disagreement.

11 Henkel Diary includes the minutes of the Trinity Sunday meeting.

12 Henkel Diary. Aderholt, Rudisill, Bohm (Beam), and the Roberts were probably members at Beaverdam. It is also probable that the Germans in this area attended church wherever and whenever it was held, therefore confusing membership further. I found the proposal for building the church in the David Hinkle (Henkel) Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, N.C.

13 Henkel Diary, 1820.

14 "Jos. E. Bell to Rev. David Henkel, copy, June 15, 1819", C. L. Coon Papers, Duke University. "Gottlieb Shober to Andrew Hoyl, Nov. 6, 1819", David Hinkle (Henkel) Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, N.C.

15 N.C. Synod Minutes, pp. 41-47. Henkel, Tennessee Synod, pp. 20-22. Dr. Bost Lecture, Oct. 15, 1989, gave insight into the 1820 session.

16 N.C. Synod Minutes, pp. 41-47. "Jacob Aderhold's Testimony Feb. 12, 1821," C. L. Coon Papers, Duke University. Henkel, Tennessee Synod, pp. 20-22. "Reasons" in Henkel Diary at the end.

17 "Answer to Mr. Hoyle by a Committee of Investigation, July 18, 1820", C. L. Coon Papers, Duke University.

18 "David Henkel", in CAP pp. 390-392. Bernheim, pp. 440-446. Henkel, Tennessee Synod, pp. 13-14, 23, 40. At this time the North Carolina Synod had two non-lutherans as ministers: Shober, a Moravian; and R. J. Johnston, an Episcopalian.

19 Henkel Diary, 1821.

20 N.C. Synod Minutes, pp. 48-49. Tennessee Synod Minutes 1821, pp. 1-34, manuscript copy found at Lutheran Archives in Salisbury.

21 Henkel Diary, 1822. "The Rev. Adam Miller's Journal", printed in A

Report of the Transactions of the Third German, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Tennessee Held at St. James Church in Green County, Tennessee on the 21st and Succeeding Days of October 1822, (New Market: S. Henkel's Printing Office, 1823), pp. 15-16.

22 Ibid., p. 6.

23 "David Henkel to the members of the N.C. Synod, April 26, 1822", C. L. Coon Papers, Duke University. See also "David Henkel" in CAP pp. 390-392. N.C. Synod Minutes, p.55. "Plain Truth Vindicated" and "Jacob Aderhold to Peter C. Boger, Jan. 1, 1823", Henkel Diary. Boger and Aderhold were responding to a unique resolution passed by the N.C. Synod. It formalized a union between the N.C. Synod of the Lutheran Church and the Episcopalian Church in North Carolina. They met jointly for a couple of years as a unified religious body.

24 Kiser, "Bethel".

25 Life Sketches, p. 135. Henkel Diary, 1823, 1824, 1825, 1826. Henkel, Tennessee Synod, pp. 64,66,71.

26 Henkel Diary, 1827, 1828, 1829, 1830. "Catherine Henkel to Ambrose Henkel, Apr. 17, 1832", Henkel Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C. "David Henkel" in CAP pp. 390-392. "David Henkel Obituary" in Tennessee Synod Minutes of 1832, pp. 15-18.

Chapter 3

REV. ADAM MILLER AND THE "OLD LOG CHURCH"

The illness and death of David Henkel adversely affected the Lutherans he had served so faithfully. At Synod his death was mourned. Petitions appeared from his churches: Beaverdam sent one. Six unnamed congregations in Lincoln County mourned his death and requested either Rev. Philip Henkel, Rev. George Easterly, or Rev. Adam Miller Jr. to replace him. Philadelphia also petitioned for a new minister. It is not known whether one of the six unnamed congregations was Long Creek. The Synod did respond. They resolved to send Rev. Adam Miller Jr. to Henkel's congregations.¹

While historical data becomes very scarce for our congregation after 1827, it appears very probable that the church burned between 1827 and 1835. Henkel's Diary suggests that something dramatic may have happened after 1827 at Long Creek. It is probable that during that year or some time afterward the church burned as recorded by A. B. "Gus" Kiser. Another clue may be the notation in Henkel's Diary of November 21, 1829. On that date Rev. Henkel baptized a large number of persons at the home of Jacob Kyser (Kiser), which was about 1½ mile southeast of present Landers Chapel Methodist Church. It may be that the church at Pasour Mountain had burned and the remaining members were meeting in homes, such as Jacob Kiser. It is also possible that someone else may have been helping with the congregation, possibly the young Adam Miller Jr. After Henkel's death Rev. Adam Miller Jr. became the spiritual leader for Long Creek Congregation. In 1835 the remaining members joined with the Methodists. In that year "the community built a new building for public worship." The new church which was made from logs was not built at the old location at the gap of Pasour Mountain. Rather, the "Old Log Church", as it was called, was built very near to present day Landers Chapel Methodist Church. The church was shared by Methodists and Lutherans. Rev. Adam Miller Jr. would remain the leader of the small Lutheran congregation until 1853. He relied greatly on the

lay leadership of the local schoolmaster, Emanuel Carpenter. Carpenter was very instrumental in the establishment of the new church. He kept the Lutheran congregation together during these difficult years. He probably used the new church for his subscription school which he operated as early as 1834.² Because of the scarcity of records during these years, a look at Rev. Adam Miller Jr. and the controversies surrounding him will be examined.

In the Tennessee Synod session of 1840 Rev. Adam Miller Jr. reported the following parochial report: 174 infants baptized; 7 adults baptized; 14 slaves baptized; 102 confirmed. In 1842 Synod was held at one of Miller's churches, Trinity (now Trinity, Vale). Miller was listed as residing at "Early Grove, Lincoln County, NC". His parochial report included 108 infants baptized; 2 adults baptized; 3 slaves baptized; 86 confirmed.³ During these years and the following years no delegates attended from our congregation. In fact no contemporary source even lists our congregation until 1859. But circumstances created changes for our congregation and the whole Tennessee Synod.

On February 21, 1845, Catharine Anthony gave birth to a child. As required by state law when an illegitimate child was born, the state of North Carolina called upon Catharine Anthony to name the father of the child or to be tried by the state. The purpose of these legal proceedings was to eliminate the state from having to maintain illegitimate children. The state contended that the father should furnish financial care for the child. Sometime after the birth of her child the rumor surfaced that the father of her child was Rev. Adam Miller Jr. The State had charged Catharine Anthony with "Bastardy". During May 1845 John Shell and W. W. McGinnis, members of Beaverdam Church which was served by Miller, visited George Anthony and talked to his daughter, Catharine. She insisted to them that the child did not belong to Rev. Miller. She stated that "if she was mean enough to have a child by a married man she would not take a preacher". She stated that "she did not know Miller from a woman, only from his outward appearance. . . ." Since she offered to swear before a magistrate, on May 14 Rev. Miller took M. M. Roberts, a magistrate, with him to see Anthony. Catharine Anthony signed her x to a statement which said her child "was not the offspring of Adam Miller. And that I have neither directly or indirectly charged him with the same. Neither would it be correct if I were to do so."⁴ But circumstances clouded the issue.

During June Sessions 1845 the case against Catharine Anthony was dropped and the fine she had already paid was returned. The apparent reason was that

charges were going to be placed against Rev. Adam Miller, the accused father. Rev. Miller found himself in a difficult situation. He claimed innocence from the charges. Yet a long jury trial would be disruptive and damaging to the churches which he served. At this time Miller held a meeting in a hotel in Lincolnton with some of the Elders of his churches. The purpose of this meeting was "to make arrangements to investigate the charge at another meeting of his Elders." On June 27 the Elders of Miller's churches met at Daniel's Church. In addition to the Elders hundreds of other persons attended. The Elders decided not to go into a church trial of Miller at this time. They urged upon Miller "the indispensable necessity of a court decision". Benjamin S. Johnston, an Elder and an attorney, proposed that Miller "should remain silent, in his office, until the legal investigation in court should have taken place."⁵ Rev. Miller agreed though reluctantly.

But he "became dissatisfied with the disposition made of his case by the Elders, at Daniel's Church". He again contacted Benjamin S. Johnston. He expressed "his determination to submit to a decision of the Church, either to be cleared or condemned". Johnston contacted General Daniel Seagle, and the two collected evidence and made arrangements for a Church trial. On July 25 the Elders met at Trinity Church. After hearing the evidence the Elders present acquitted Rev. Adam Miller, after which Miller began to preach again. His detractors contended that not all his Elders attended this meeting, that the Elders did not have authority from their churches to try Miller, that it "was principally a one sided trial" with "little of the evidence against him" before the Elders, and that the Trinity meeting was hastily gotten up and organized primarily at Miller's urging.⁶ All these proceedings were done before his case had reached court.

On September 2, 1845, the Elders met in Lincolnton at B. S. Johnston's. The purpose of the meeting was to determine whether to discontinue the legal proceedings or whether to fight the legal action against him. One Elder represented each church, and they voted two for suit and five against. Despite this ruling Miller did prosecute "the law-suit with no great hope of success", because the clergy and others thought it would be better to lose the case than not to fight it since it was a slander against the Tennessee Synod and Miller. During September Sessions Adam Miller was formally charged with Bastardy in the Lincoln County Court. He came into court "and [made] up an issue & denie[d] that He is the father of the child."⁷ A very significant discovery in the

polling of Miller's churches is that our congregation is not mentioned as one of his seven churches. There are two possibilities: First, old Long Creek Congregation may not have been a fully organized church at this time at its new location at present Landers Chapel. Secondly, mention is made that before Miller's difficulties he had more than the seven churches which voted. The seven were "those only of which [Miller] now had charge."⁸

In October Rev. Adam Miller attended the Tennessee Synod meeting. He felt acquitted by his churches and hoped to put the entire situation behind him. The Synod appointed a "Committee on Letters" to investigate the case because "considerable dissatisfaction existed in the churches in N. C." This committee reported back to the entire Synod, and the Synod passed a resolution which appointed Rev. H. Goodman and Rev. J. Killian to "take the voice of his congregations" as to whether they "wish him to continue his official duties, that [Synod], in that case, concur with them, provided they honorably acquit him." While Miller contended that this action was unconstitutional, he agreed to abide by the wishes of the Synod. He also contended that the words "provided they honorably acquit him" was added by Rev. P. C. Henkel and Rev. J. R. Peter-⁹ son. Miller hoped this last vote would end the controversy.

When Rev. Miller returned to North Carolina, he informed his churches that they would be called upon to vote whether to keep Miller as pastor. He told them to "turn out and vote, regardless of my feelings. That I should respect the man who voted against me the same as the one who voted for me." Rev. Goodman and Killian performed their duties, even though they encountered questions in the churches about the constitutionality of their proceedings and about whether this vote would end the issue. On November 26, 1845, Rev. Jacob Killian wrote Rev. Miller. He stated the votes thusly: St. Johns 28 for and 1 against; St. Pauls 26 for and 1 against; Hasses 9 for and 1 against; Trinity 28 for and 7 against; Daniels 15 for and 4 against; Beaverdam 9 for and 9 against; Christs 12 for and 1 against. so Rev. Miller rejoiced that the vote tallied 127 in favor of him and 24 against him.¹⁰ He continued to preach and minister even though the court case cast a dark shadow on his career. The list of seven churches is identical to the earlier list. Our congregation was again not listed.

During the December Sessions of 1845 the Lincoln County Court tried the case of the "State vs Adam Miller". There was a jury trial. The jury found "that the defendant is the father of the child, as he stands charged." A

motion was made for a new trial which was denied. Miller gave notice of appeal. It was granted and he was bound on his own recognizance until next court. Then Miller withdrew his appeal. The trial was quite an ordeal. There were twelve state witnesses against Rev. Miller. There were ten persons who testified for defendant Miller. W. W. McGinnas was listed as a witness for Miller. Moses M. Roberts was listed as both a state's witness and as a defense witness.¹¹ In the records his request for an appeal seems to be an afterthought. The affect the court case would have on the whole controversy was overwhelming.

For Rev. Adam Miller the year of 1845 had been a tumultuous one. He had experienced lows, then highs, then lows. One can only speculate how all these proceedings affected the small congregation meeting at the "Old Log Church". The evidence suggests that the congregation was not one of the seven churches which belonged to Miller after his indictment. It may be that during this period "there was no regular pastor. . . ." Mr. A. B. "Gus" Kiser made this statement about the period from 1820-1835. He then stated specifically that Rev. Miller was pastor for 18 years from 1835-1853. It may be more likely that the period for which our church was without a regular pastor was from 1831-around 1847, from the death of David Henkel until Miller took complete responsibility for our congregation. Since Miller took over Henkel's churches at his death, Miller probably served our congregation periodically. He probably preached at the "Old Log Church" whenever he was in the community.¹² Rev. Miller left a significant impact on our congregation and its future following the Synod meeting of 1846.

Following the congregational vote taken by Goodman and Killian, Rev. Adam Miller assumed that he had the support of his congregations. Yet, following the disposition of the court case in which he was found guilty, some of his members began to question his leadership, and some had lost faith in him as their pastor. With this scenario in October 1846 Rev. Miller attended the Synod meeting at Daniels Church in present Lincoln County. Synod appointed a committee to consider old business, which on Wednesday made a report "relative to the charge against the Rev. A. Miller". Discussion lasted two days. In an effort to end the debate, Michael Rudisill, father-in-law to Miller, suggested that W. W. McGinnis, a defense witness in Miller's trial, be allowed to address the Synod concerning "all the circumstances relative to the charge against the Rev. A. Miller". After extended discussion Synod voted "that the requisitions of the resolution of that report were not complied with." In

other words Synod voted that Miller had not been honorably acquitted by his churches based on the elections taken by Goodman and Killian. "Whereupon Mr. Miller withdrew himself from this body, and consequently placed himself beyond its reach; therefore the necessity of further action is suspended."¹³

Rev. Adam Miller felt wronged in these proceedings. Twice he had been acquitted the previous year: first by the Elders at Trinity Church, and second by his seven churches individually. Miller contended that the Tennessee Synod Constitution prohibited the actions taken at Synod. The Constitution, written by Rev. David Henkel, specified that the Synod had few actual powers. The congregations kept authority over calling their own ministers, expelling them, and making requests from them. Nowhere could the Synod try a minister or even a church member. These powers were left with the congregation. Miller contended that there was a significant difference between a church trial and a civil trial. He felt acquitted by his parishioners. He believed that his detractors in the Synod were more interested in the name of the Tennessee Synod than in the truth.¹⁴ The Synod contended the issue differently. They suggested that Miller could not have been acquitted by his congregations "whilst there was sufficient evidence of his guilt." They contended that of the congregational vote - 127 for and 24 against - most members did not vote at all. The members who did not vote did so because they did not want to assume that responsibility, because they did not have all the evidence, and because "they wished to see the result of the legal investigation of Mr. Miller in court." Synod leaders contended that Synod had the powers it exercised at the 1846 meeting because they were implied to them by its constitution. They felt that they could try a minister for immorality; they felt that they were not bound to accept a minister into Synod unless that person were of "good moral character".¹⁵ Upon these two opposing viewpoints Lutherans in the Tennessee Synod debated.

While the Tennessee Synod felt that the issue had at last been resolved at the 1846 session, Rev. Adam Miller, his churches, and his supporters were reluctant to close the door to their association. In October 1847 Rev. Miller and his supporters attended the Tennessee Synod meeting armed with numerous petitions concerning the Miller case. Over 400 persons had signed these petitions. The first set of petitions were from churches whose delegates had withdrawn from the Synod and from persons not belonging "to our church". A second set of petitions were from churches, Rev. George Easterly, and individual

members of churches which were associated with the Synod. They contended that Synod had "dealt with Mr. Miller contrary to our constitution and the scriptures". They wanted the Synod proceedings to be revoked, or they would withdraw from Synod. A third set of petitions were from churches formerly served by Rev. Miller and still within the Synod and two letters from Rev. Ambrose Henkel and Rev. Polycarp C. Henkel. They contended that Synod had acted properly at the 1846 session, and that "it would be subversive to the best interests, if not ruinous to the Synod, to receive the said Miller again into its connexion". They indicated that if Synod would reverse itself and allow Miller back into Synod they would withdraw. Synod decided to publicly read the petitions. After the petitions were read, a committee was appointed "to report to-morrow morning on the petitions and letters pertaining to the case of the Rev. Adam Miller". After a "full investigation" the committee recommended to Synod that in its former proceedings it had "violated neither its Constitution or the Holy Scriptures and cannot therefore disannul its proceedings." After discussion Synod approved the above report "with but two dissenting voices." Rev. Miller was given permission to address Synod, "provided [he] did not speak against the proceedings of the Synod." He declined and left Synod with his followers because "the principles of the Synod had been violated in the most shameful and sinful manner".¹⁶

Rev. Adam Miller spent the next year without synodical connection. He had witnessed the loss of some of his congregations and the split of others. He maintained his innocence throughout. Of the seven churches charged to Miller in 1845 Beaverdam, Christs, and Trinity remained in the Tennessee Synod. St. Pauls, St. Johns, Hasses, and Daniels appeared to have split. Of the Elders who judged his case at Trinity Church twelve repudiated their verdict of innocent. They stated that they only had "a part of the evidence", had little time for reflection, and would have decided the case differently if they had heard the testimony which was given at his trial. Following the 1847 session Miller preached to those who wished to hear him. He did abide by the law of the land. Two records exist that show that Miller paid his "allowance" to Catharine Anthony as prescribed by law. In June 1848 his final payment was made. In addition during the June Court Sessions of 1846, Miller was charged court costs in the amount of \$69.22. Lincoln County Sheriff A. H. Shuford recorded that his costs were paid in full.¹⁷ A very dark day for Miller was now behind him.

In 1848 Rev. George Easterly, who had written a letter to the Tennessee Synod session of 1847, organized a rival synod. It became known as the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod Re-organized. Easterly was an older minister whose churches were located in eastern Tennessee. He believed that the Tennessee Synod had violated its constitution and had become authoritarian. The new synod adopted the original Tennessee Synod Constitution as its own and contended that its parent synod had abandoned its constitution. On October 6, 1849, the second session of the Tennessee Synod Reorganized met. It received into membership Rev. Adam Miller and his churches and Rev. D. S. Schoolfield and his churches. The following churches petitioned Synod to join them since they were being ministered by Rev. Adam Miller: Warlick's School-House (Daniels in present Lincoln County, N. C.); St. Johns (in Catawba County, N.C.); St. Pauls (Catawba County); Rhyne's Church (currently Antioch, Dallas in Gaston County). A total of 136 person signed the petitions. Of course absent from the list was our congregation. Yet, Rhyne's Church, which had never appeared before in Tennessee Minutes, had the large number of 34 members who signed. That number is rather large for a new congregation. It is possible that our members simply signed their petition and allowed their delegate, Samuel Pasour, to represent them.¹⁸

On September 14, 1850, the Tennessee Synod held its session. Among other things a report was recorded from the proceedings of the third meeting of the "Associate Council of Lutheran churches of Catawba, Lincoln & Gaston" which had met at Salem Church in Lincoln County. It stated "that every honorable effort was made to acquit the Rev. A. Miller of the charge of adultery". However, "all resulted in an entire failure, to some extent, the futility of the proceedings of the pretended 'Reorganized E. L. T. Synod', and the falsity of its allegations preferred against our Synod." It recommended a reply to the charges and asked Synod "to prepare a set of church rules for the governance of our congregations."¹⁹ The war of words continued.

On October 12, 1850, the Tennessee Synod Reorganized held its third conference at St. John's Church in Catawba County, one of Miller's congregations. Among the congregational petitions was one from Ebenezer Church, Lincoln County. It was signed by nine persons and stated that Rev. Miller was serving them. "They intended to organize themselves into a congregation." This congregation became St. Paul's, Crouse. Another petition was read from Rhyne's Church. Again no mention was made of our congregation. The Synod again attacked the Tennessee Synod for its treatment of Miller. Because of the comments made in

the Tennessee Reorganized 1849 minutes, the Tennessee Synod printed its VINDICATION during October of 1850. Rev. P. C. Henkel was the Tennessee Synod minister for the Catawba County churches which Miller also served. There was much discussion in the 1850 Tennessee Reorganized minutes about how Henkel had misrepresented the 1849 minutes to his congregations. An attempt by Rev. J. R. Moser, a Tennessee Synod minister, to mediate a truce in the war of words was not successful. Rev. Miller reported over the last three years 318 baptized and 178 confirmed. Personal tragedy struck Rev. Adam Miller. On October 31, 1850, his daughter, Mrs. Catherine E. Setzer, died leaving an infant child of about 14 months. On December 25 Rev. Miller lost his wife, the former Ann Mary Rudisill.²⁰ Charges and counter-charges would continue into the next year.

On October 30, 1851, the Tennessee Synod Reorganized held its fourth conference at St. James Church in Tennessee. The Tennessee Synod's VINDICATION was read in open session, and a committee was appointed to respond. Our congregation was again not mentioned. Ebenezer Church did petition Synod to "do justice to all by conforming to all ancient ground work of Lutheranism, . . . [to] reply to the vindication . . . , and a congregational mode of church government . . . [be] fairly maintained." Fifteen persons signed the petition which closed by requesting that Synod meet "in their church". Other churches under Miller's charge which gave petitions included Millers, St. Pauls, Warlick's Schoolhouse, Hasses, and St. Johns. It may be assumed that our congregation agreed with the sentiments mentioned in these petitions. A candidate for the ministry made application at Synod. He was George L. Hunt. When these Minutes were printed, the DEFENCE was printed with it.²¹

On September 30, 1852, George L. Hunt was ordained as a deacon. As a young man of 20, he removed to North Carolina where he studied the ministry under Rev. Adam Miller. Sometime the following year Miller made Hunt responsible for the Lutherans at the "Old Log Church". He would serve our church for 24 years. On December 4, 1853, he married Sarah Ann Carpenter, a member at our church. About this same time a contract was drawn to pay Rev. G. L. Hunt "for preaching this year for us at the church near C. C. Evenescens [Evans's]." This undated contract was signed by Frederick Carpenter, Emanuel Carpenter, Levi Linch, Jonas Senter, Philip Weaver, Daniel Hines, Jacob Kiser, John Paysour, Philip Kiser, William Carpenter, F. Carpenter, and John Fronabarger. The total commitment was \$12.00. The Churchbook recorded that Rev. Hunt began services at the "Old Log Church" at present Landers Chapel in 1854 and "about 18 months later Bethel cong. was organized." On August 4, 1857, Rev. Adam Miller married Susan Carpenter Roberts,

daughter of "Blacksmith" Jacob Carpenter. A. B. "Gus" Kiser referred to Rev. Adam Miller as a "son in law" of Bethel because Susan Carpenter Roberts was a member of Bethel. On April 11, 1858, Hunt was ordained as a minister at Ebenezer Church. The year of 1858 was also important to our congregation. It was when "a committee was appointed to decide upon a location" for a new church for only the Lutheran congregation. A list of communing members for this period included 30 persons. They were: Emanuel Carpenter, Katie Carpenter, Frederick Carpenter, Martha Carpenter, Betsie Carpenter, Christeen Carpenter, Barbara Carpenter, Frederick Carpenter Jr., Michael Carpenter, Rebecca Carpenter, Catherine Carpenter, Francis Carpenter, John Carpenter, Lawson Carpenter, W. B. Carpenter, Barbara Carpenter, Millie Carpenter, John Froneberger, Margaret Froneberger, Sara Hunt, Phillip Kiser, Louise Kiser, John Kiser, John Pasour, Elmina Pasour, John B. Summey, Nancy Summey, Jonas Senter, Malinda Senter, Mahala Senter.²² The little congregation had a strong spiritual leader who wanted it to grow.

On October 16, 1858, the Tennessee Synod Reorganized met. No mention was made at this session of our congregation. On October 26, 1859, Synod held its tenth session. Among the delegates was Daniel Thornburg, who gave his address as "Nail Factory, Gaston Co. N. C." He was a member of Bethel. He is the first known delegate from Bethel to have attended a Tennessee Synod Reorganized meeting. A petition was read from Antioch Church (formerly Rhyne's Church), but none was received from Bethel. The committee searching for a new church site found one. On March 6, 1860, William Sloan deeded about three acres to "John Pasour, Jonas Senter, and Emanuel Carpenter Trustees of the Lutheran religious Society". Sloan donated the land because "of the natural respect I bear towards all religious Societies".²³ This land is the current location of Bethel Church.

1 Report of the Transactions of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod During Their Eleventh Session Held in Emanuel's Church, Greene County, Tennessee From Monday the 13th to Tuesday the 14th September, 1831, (New Market: S. Henkel's Office, 1832), pp. 9-10.

2 Kiser, "Bethel". Kiser knew many of the old members of Bethel. He knew Emanuel Carpenter and others. His version of our history was probably gotten from recollections by these old members. CAP, pp. 478-483 explores the history of Emanuel Carpenter. Kiser-Carpenter Chronicle, pp. 44-47; 147.

3 Tennessee Synod Minutes, 1840, 1842.

4 Adam Miller, The Defence, (Greeneville, Tenn.: "Spy" Office, 1852), pp. 96-97. The Defence was printed at the end of the 1851 Minutes of the Tennessee Synod Reorganized. I located the manuscript at the Lutheran Archives in Salisbury.

5 "June Sessions 1845" Minute Docket, Lincoln County Court June 1842-Dec. 1845, C. R. 060.301.13, Lincoln County Collection, Department of Archives & History, Raleigh, N. C. Proceedings of the Evan. Lutheran Tennessee Synod in the Case of The Rev. Adam Miller, Vindicated, (Salem, N. C.: Blum and Son, 1850), pp. 17-18. I located this manuscript at the Lutheran Archives in Salisbury, N. C. Vindicated addresses the opinion of the Tennessee Synod in the Adam Miller case. The earlier quoted Defence gives the opinion of Miller and his followers which formed the Tennessee Synod Reorganized. Defence, pp. 22-23.

6 Defence, pp. 24-25. Vindicated, pp. 18-20.

7 Defence, pp. 37-39. "September Sessions 1845", Minute Docket, Lincoln County Court, C. R. 060.301.13, Lincoln County Collection, Department of Archives & History.

8 Defence, p. 33.

9 Ibid., pp. 31-33. Vindicated, pp. 20-21. Tennessee Synod Minutes, 1845. The Minutes found at the Lutheran Archives in Salisbury had pp. 7-8 and pp. 11-12 cut out of them. It is on these pages where references to the Miller case was found. I relied upon Defence and Vindicated for quotes of the Minutes. I also relied upon William R. Rhyne Sr., "The Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Reorganized 1848-1848", (Unpublished Theses at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, S. C., 1968), pp. 6-8.

10 Defence, pp. 32-36.

11 "December Sessions 1845", Minute Docket, Lincoln County Court, C. R. 060.301.13, Lincoln County Collection, Department of Archives & History. Criminal Action Papers, 1846 File, Lincoln County Collection, Department of Archives & History.

12 Kiser, "Bethel."

13 Tennessee Synod Minutes, 1846, pp. 6-7, found at Lutheran Archives, Salisbury. Defence, pp. 39-43. Vindicated, p. 21.

14 Defence, pp. 39-42; 56-65.

15 Vindicated, pp. 21-33.

16 Tennessee Synod Minutes, 1847, pp. 9-11, at Lutheran Archives, Salisbury. Defence, pp. 43-48. Vindicated, pp. 31-33 discuss Synod rationale for their actions in the 1847 session.

17 Tennessee Synod Minutes, 1846, 1847, 1848, 1849, 1850, 1853, 1856, 1859. Defence, pp. 123-126. Vindicated, p. 33. "[July Sessions] 1847", "June Sessions 1848", Lincoln County Execution Docket 1846-1868, C. R. 060.304.4, Lincoln County Collection, Department of Archives & History. Criminal Action Papers, 1846 File, Lincoln County Collection, Department of Archives & History.

18 Report of the Transactions of the Second Session of the Re-organized Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, (Greeneville, Tenn.: 'Spy' Office, 1850), pp. 4-5; 7-21; 23; 26, located at Lutheran Archives, Salisbury.

19 Tennessee Synod Minutes, 1850, p. 7.

20 Report of the Transactions of the Third Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod Re-Organized, (Greeneville, Tenn.: "Spy" Office, 1851), pp. 7-8-, 11-19, located at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Library, Columbia, S. C. Defence, p. 121-122.

21 Report of the Transactions of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, Re-Organized, (Greeneville, Tenn.: "Spy" Office, 1852), pp. 5-6, 9-13, located at the Lutheran Archives, Salisbury.

22 Minutes of Concordia English District, p. 65. Kiser, "Bethel". Emanuel Carpenter Papers, A. B. "Gus" Kiser Collection, held by Clyde Kiser, Bessemer City, N. C., which were printed in CAP, p. 480-481. Curtis Bynum comp., Marriage Bonds of Lincoln and Tryon Counties North Carolina, (1929 reprinted 1962), p. 68, 89. Churchbook I, in Record of Interesting and Important Events. Rev. Westenbarger apparently wrote about Hunt beginning the services. He made no mention of the services of Rev. Adam Miller at the "Old Log Church". See also CAP, pp. 617-618, 748-752.

23 Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, Reorganized 1858, pp. 1-4, located at the Lutheran Archives, Salisbury, N. C. Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod Re-Organized (Greeneville, Tenn.: Robertson & Turner, 1859), pp. 2-4, located at the Lutheran Archives, Salisbury, N. C. Gaston County Deed Book 3, page 187, Register of Deeds, Gaston County Court-house, Gastonia, N. C.

Chapter 4

BETHEL GAINS ITS IDENTITY

The members of Bethel must have felt great joy when they received their own land for their own church building. They recalled the Little Mountain Meeting-house at the gap of Pasour Mountain. They remembered the sorrow they felt when it burned and when Rev. David Henkel died. While they had been happy to join with the Methodists in the "Old Log Church," they probably waited with anticipation for their own church on their own land. In 1860 their dream appeared fulfilled.

On January 13, 1860, Jonas Senter made a contract to build "a Lutheran Church 20 feet wide and 24 feet Long 9 feet high three windows and one door. . . ." The congregation agreed to pay Senter \$65 "when said house is finished." Senter agreed to complete the small church before "the first day of May next". A "log building" was erected at the new site. New members joined the church. An additional 25 members are listed as being communing members in 1860 at the new site. They were: Caleb Carpenter, Sarah -?- Margaret Crane, Jonas Froneberger, Elmina Froneberger, Susanah Froneberger, Katie Froneberger, Barbara Froneberger, John Hovis, Lottie Hovis, M. Magdalean Hager, Simri Kiser, George Kiser, Sallie Kiser, Barbara Kiser, Elizabeth Kiser, Christene Kiser, Caleb Kiser, Annie Kiser, Christ Kiser, Peggy McKee, Sam Pasour, Susan Pasour, Sallie Pasour, Hannah Wells. The congregation planned to build a nicer frame church. Because of the Civil War its construction was delayed. Sometime between 1868 and 1877 a frame church building was completed. A. B. "Gus" Kiser stated that the frame church was built "about 1868, when the church was built and the name 'Bethel' was used for the first time by this particular congregation." In the Churchbook it is recorded that the frame church was built about 1876 or 1877.¹ With Rev. George L. Hunt at its new location Bethel Church looked with anticipation into the future.

Because of the scarcity of records little is known of the years from 1860 until 1893, when the oldest surviving churchbook begins. Apparently the Tennessee

Synod Reorganized did not meet from 1859 until 1871. On October 28, 1871, the eleventh session met at Antioch Church in Gaston County. Caleb Carpenter was the delegate from Bethel. Also present was M. L. Carpenter who was listed as an applicant to the ministry. The following churches were listed as being served by Rev. George L. Hunt: St. Pauls, Antioch, St. Johns, Millers, Hasses, and Bethel. All gave petitions. The petition from Bethel wanted the continued "promulgation and perpetuation of the pure bible doctrines, and christian church principles. . . ." "They have regular services, and would be glad to see some other persons engage in preaching the true Lutheran doctrine. They think G. S. Pasour would make a good preacher." The Synod passed a resolution condemning the 1866 Tennessee Synod Constitution. Because it "confirms and establishes their illegal proceedings, but is actually in direct conflict with the principles embodied in the first six articles of the original constitution", the Tennessee Synod Reorganized resolved "never [to] associate with them under their new Constitution, for by so doing we would be partakers of their evil deeds, and the true principles of the church would be forever lost to our posterity." The Synod further resolved to oppose "missionary schemes" and "beneficiary education" because they believed it would make preachers "a set of 'overseers', 'taskmasters', and severe 'pursethreshers'." They also adopted two more resolutions. The first stated the Synod's opposition to "the exercise of judiciary power of a synod" because they believed each congregation had sovereign authority itself. The second pointed out that Synod's "opponents are departing farther and farther" from the true doctrines of the church and Lutheranism. It planned to remain "pure" in its teachings.²

The Civil War and time had changed the lives of the Lutherans of Bethel Church and the Tennessee Synod Reorganized. At this first meeting since 1859 only one minister, Rev. Hunt, served the congregations. Rev. Hunt "was a man of strong religious convictions, and what he believed to be the truth he defended in the face of all opposition." His followers "often sat and listened as Father Hunt relate instances of his life with that peculiar smile of his, until [they] wondered how such a frail piece of humanity could so cheerfully bear such heavy burden." The session had only five delegates and one applicant for the ministry. Only the churches of St. Johns, Millers, St. Pauls, Bethel, and Antioch were represented. The MINUTES mourned the death of Rev. Adam Miller. He had died on February 13, 1868. Appended to the MINUTES was an "Address on the State of the Church" written by Rev. Hunt. His "Address" attacked the new Tennessee Synod Constitution and argued the Reorganized position. Under these dire circumstances

the next Synod session was held on September 21, 1872. Michael L. Carpenter was the delegate for both Bethel and Ebenezer Churches. He was still listed as an applicant for the ministry. G. S. Pasour was listed as a deacon. Bethel Church sent a petition to Synod. It supported Synod's position against the new Tennessee Synod Constitution. "They have Rev. G. L. Hunt for their preacher, and are well satisfied with his preaching, believing that he is a faithful soldier of the cross." They were pleased with the preaching of Deacon G. S. Pasour and want "to see applicant M. L. Carpenter making some efforts to promulgate the everlasting Gospel, as they believe he is sound in the faith."³ They closed by asking "for the next Synod to be held in their church."

The members of Bethel got their wish and entertained the next session of Synod at their church. On September 19, 1873, the thirteenth Tennessee Synod Reorganized met at Bethel Church. J. F. Carpenter was the delegate from Bethel. M. L. Carpenter served as Synod secretary. Bethel delivered a brief petition to the session. It opposed the "new measures of the day." "They have Rev. G. L. Hunt for their Pastor and they believe that he is a faithful minister of Christ." They want "the old Hymn Book and Catechism reprinted" and offered to again host the next Synod. "They beseech us all to hold fast to the good old way." The Synod took a position on the issue of temperance, which was a moral and political issue of the day. The Synod did not believe that "the mere act of manufacturing or using wine, cider, or spirituous liquors, is inconsistent with a christian life or contrary to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. . . ." It pointed to Scripture and the Augsburg Confession to prove its position. Synod acknowledged that drunkenness was a problem and that the problem was growing. "It is not the manufacturer or user of a thing that ought to be punished, but the abuser." Synod ordered the reprinting of David Henkel's article against the General Synod. Synod also voted to meet biennially afterward. After Synod adjourned Rev. Hunt preached the funeral of Samuel Jacob Carpenter, the infant son of John F. and Dulcenia Carpenter. Six persons were confirmed into the church afterward. On the following day Rev. Hunt ordained Deacon G. S. Pasour as a minister at Bethel Church.⁴ Truly Bethel congregation was becoming a very important part of the Synod.

On October 9 and 10, 1875, the Tennessee Synod Reorganized met at St. Johns Church in Catawba County. "Rev. M. L. Carpenter, Bethel, Gaston co., N.C. and Pleasant Hill, Lincoln co., N.C." was listed as a delegate. Mr. J. J. Bollinger was listed as a delegate from Ebenezer Church. Two pastors were listed, Rev. George S. Pasour and Rev. George L. Hunt;deacons were Rev. Michael L. Carpenter &

Jonas Pasour; and one applicant for the ministry was listed, D. C. Huffman of "Happy Home, Burke co., N.C." Bethel Church sent a petition. They wished Synod to continue to transact nothing "repugnant to the Holy scriptures, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession or the old Constitution." They stated "that in God's word we finde [sic] good and sufficient rules for the government of the church, and that it would be high treason against Christ to submit to any others." "They express[ed] satisfaction with their Pastor Rev. G. S. Pasour." "They heard Applicant M. L. Carpenter preach his first sermon in their church, and say he proclaimed good tidings, and pray that he go on in the good old way." The following churches had heard M. L. Carpenter: Ebenezer, Antioch, Millers, Hasses, and St. James and Salem in Tennessee. Ebenezer "received two visits from Applicant M. L. Carpenter, and believe he will make a safe and able teacher, if sufficient encouragement be given him." Antioch received "one visit from Applicant M. L. Carpenter, whom they recommend to Synod as a moral young man, sound in the faith; and ask to advance him to the office of deacon, provided he concent [sic] to be promoted to that sacred office." Synod resolved to ordain M. L. Carpenter and Jonas Pasour deacons. On Sunday, October 10 Rev. Hunt and Rev. George Pasour ordained them deacons by the laying on of hands.⁵ Communion was given to about 150 communicants at the service.

Apparently Rev. George S. Pasour served as pastor of Bethel, Antioch, and Ebenezer from 1873-1877. A. B. "Gus" Kiser left off the service of Rev. Pasour when he wrote of our history. Deacon Michael L. Carpenter was ordained at Antioch Church so that at the 1877 Synod session he was an ordained minister serving Bethel Church. The Bethel Churchbook stated that Rev. G. S. Pasour served from 1878-1882 or 1883. The Churchbook was correct in his service but incorrect in his time of service. On September 15, 1877, the fifteenth session of the Tennessee Synod Reorganized met at Antioch Church. Daniel Thornburg was Bethel's delegate. Bethel petitioned Synod suggesting that Synod again show the differences between the Tennessee Synod and the Reorganized Synod. "They have Rev. M. L. Carpenter for their regular Pastor, and are well pleased with his doctrine." A committee made up of G. L. Hunt, M. L. Carpenter, and D. C. Huffman was appointed to point out differences between "the Lutheran bodies in North Carolina and elsewhere. . . ."⁶

On September 6, 1879, Synod met at Miller's Church in Catawba County. The Minutes were torn so that whether Bethel had a delegate could not be determined. Bethel did send a petition. In it they admonished Synod for not printing "Points of Difference" as they suggested in the last Synod. They asked that

next Synod be held at Bethel. "They have Rev. M. L. Carpenter for their regular minister, and are well pleased with his teachings." Synod authorized the printing of "Points of Difference" and set the next session at Bethel Church. Rev. M. L. Carpenter once again served as secretary of the Synod. The "Report of Committee on Points of Difference" appears at the end of the Minutes. It is a lengthy discussion of constitutional and doctrinal differences between the various synods.⁷

It is assumed that the next session was held as planned at Bethel Church. Those Minutes have not been located by the author, but another source states that the session was held at Bethel and that Bethel sent a delegate as did Antioch, Ebenezer, and "Hickory Grove School House" listed in Lincoln County. At about this time Bethel was given a large Bible for use. The following inscription is found in the Bible: "Holy Bible for the Church Bethal Holy Ev. Lutherin Church paster Rev. M. L. Carpenter." This is the oldest Bible known to have survived. The next few years were years of unrest in the Synod. Despite its continual conservatism circumstances were to force change upon the Synod. It still had few ministers, many of whom had to work at other jobs to support their ministerial work. Ministers often had to serve more churches than were advisable. Synod could not provide for needed items like hymnals and catachisms. It also could not provide for proper instruction of its ministers.⁸

Because of these concerns the leadership of the Synod wrote a letter to the Tennessee Synod requesting a "free conference" together. This letter was signed by Rev. G. L. Hunt, Rev. M. L. Carpenter, Rev. D. C. Huffman, and C. H. L. Schuette. The meeting together was to be near Conover as near as possible to October 16, 1883. On October 13 the Tennessee Synod appointed Rev. S. Henkel and Rev. M. L. Little to meet with the representatives of the Tennessee Synod Re-Organized. On October 17 Henkel and Little reported to the Tennessee Synod that they "had a short interview with them, and that they furnished us no definite response, but intimated that, as their meeting had adjourned, it was too late at this time for such conference." This brief exchange indicates that the Tennessee Synod Reorganized had just held a synod meeting, that it was considering joining a larger synod, and that the attempt to reconcile old differences seemed to fail. About this time Rev. M. L. Little became pastor of Antioch Lutheran, formerly of Tennessee Synod Reorganized. Antioch then joined the Tennessee Synod.⁹

As early as 1882 Rev. George L. Hunt had written Rev. E. L. S. Tressel, President of Concordia English District which was aligned with the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States. On November 24, 1883, the Tennessee Synod Reorganized sent a letter of application to the Concordia English District. On April 30, 1884, they sent a letter of application to the meeting of the Joint Synod of Ohio which was held in Baltimore, Maryland. The letter noted that the Joint Synod of Ohio taught "the Word of God in its purity, and administer[ed] the holy Sacrements according to the institution of Christ, and [held] to the Confessions of our dear Church. . . ." It noted that the constitutions of both synods were consistent. Their application for membership was accepted. The Concordia English District was a synodical body under the jurisdiction of the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States. In later years the Joint Synod of Ohio became the America Lutheran Church. The addition increased the membership of the Concordia District by three pastors, eight congregations, and about 500 communicants. Rev. M. L. Carpenter with his three churches, Bethel, Ebenezer, and Luthers Chapel was received as was Rev. Hunt and Rev. Huffman. Also on April 30 Rev. M. L. Carpenter attended his first convention of the Concordia English District. It was held at St. Peter's Church in Baltimore, Maryland.¹⁰ Joining a new synod would enhance the religious life of Bethel.

Apparently, the immediate reason for the union with the Concordia District was the need for a seminary to train potential ministers. Rev. George Hunt wanted a seminary for his son, Luther, to attend. After entering the Concordia District the new members began emphasis upon a local school for applicants for the ministry. On September 16, 1885, Rev. M. L. Carpenter with lay delegate C. S. Carpenter, who attended Bethel, attended the Concordia District convention at Zion's Church in Virginia. Rev. George L. Hunt also attended. Rev. Carpenter submitted the following parochial report to synod. He served 3 congregations and one mission. He listed 130 communicants, 20 infant baptisms, one adult baptism, 7 confirmations, 3 marriages, 8 funerals, and one Sunday School. He listed \$6.50 in the general treasury, \$38.40 in travelling expense, and \$5.90 in miscellaneous. On May 5, 1886, Rev. Carpenter and delegates C. S. Carpenter and J. E. Thornburg attended the next Concordia District meeting at St. John's Church in Catawba County, NC. Rev. Carpenter listed his parochial report showing 4 congregations (he apparently now considered his mission at Friday's Schoolhouse to be a congregation) with 200 communicants. He baptized 12 infants, confirmed 5 persons, gave 2 funerals, and listed one Sunday School. It is assumed that the Sunday School was at Bethel. At this session a petition

was drafted to be presented to the Joint Synod of Ohio to establish "a Practical English Seminary at Hickory, North Carolina." The proposal was approved. The Joint Synod of Ohio appointed the following to be the board to oversee management of the school: Revs. G. L. Hunt, E. L. S. Tressel, and M. L. Carpenter. On October 17, 1887, the school opened in a private residence in Hickory. The first teacher was Rev. E. G. Tressel. On November 25, 1887, Rev. Luther M. Hunt, son of George L. Hunt, took charge of the school. He was to remain in that position until May 18, 1888. Certainly the membership at Bethel greatly supported the new seminary. The obvious reason for this support was that during the period of Rev. Hunt's professorship Bethel furnished two of the four seminary students: Jonas M. Senter and L. J. Sidney Carpenter.¹¹ The school was successful, and plans were made for its expansion.

On May 11, 1887, Rev. M. L. Carpenter attended synod at Mt. Calvary in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. He was elected vice president of the convention. While Rev. Carpenter failed to attend the next convention, his work on the seminary enhanced its progress. In January 1888 the Joint Synod of Ohio purchased the Catholic school in Hickory in order to expand the seminary. Rev. Luther Hunt assumed leadership until Rev. H. K. G. Doermann was persuaded to join as professor. On November 1, 1888, a parochial department opened. It soon numbered over 60 students. Jonas M. Senter, candidate for the ministry from our church, taught at the parochial school in the mornings. The school flourished for some years to come as St. Paul's Practical Seminary. In 1890 Jonas Senter was ordained a pastor. It may be assumed that Bethel gave strong support to St. Paul's Practical Seminary since two of its members were early students.¹²

The ministry of Rev. George L. Hunt helped to inspire three of Bethel's children to consider the ministry. Hunt had a direct affect upon Rev. Michael Luther Carpenter. He led him into the ministry and allowed him to assume leadership of Bethel and Ebenezer. Rev. Hunt and Rev. Carpenter laid the groundwork for the Lord to lead two more members of our congregation into the ministry during the 1880's. Rev. Jonas M. Senter, brother-in-law of Rev. Carpenter, and Rev. L. J. Sidney Carpenter, nephew of Rev. Carpenter, felt led to enter the ministry.¹³ The 1880's must have been years of great excitement at the little frame church. It is most unfortunate that so little data has survived to detail these years.

Rev. M. L. Carpenter did expand his original pastorate. On October 1, 1882, he attempted to start a church at "Carpenters School house" which was

located in front of present (1990) Webb's Chapel Baptist Church. Nine persons signed and committed \$7.25 to pay Rev. Carpenter "for services as pastor." Apparently the mission never was able to maintain itself. He also organized a church north of Lincolnton called Luther's Chapel. The congregation built a church in 1887. He also "preached once a month at Friday's school house near [present] St. Pauls Church [Hardin]." His ministry there led to the later formation of St. Paul's, Hardin which today (1990) is a thriving congregation. While Rev. M. L. Carpenter did receive some salary for his work, he also "operated a farm to make a living." Luther's Chapel only could give him "voluntary contributions and which were meagre." He often accepted "wheat, corn, or feed for his cattle" as payment for the work of the Lord. These hardships did not prevent his inspiration toward Rev. Senter, Rev. Sid Carpenter, and even to his own son, Rev. R. M. "Burt" Carpenter. Rubertus Melanchthon Carpenter would enter and graduate from the academy and seminary at St. Paul's Practical Seminary. In 1897 he graduated and began to preach the Gospel in the Joint Synod of Ohio.¹⁴ One must also assume that the lay leadership of Bethel during these years supported these candidates for the ministry. With Christian examples these young men could meet the challenges seminary and the pastorship had for them. Bethel prepared them well for their work.

One of the most exciting events in the 1880's occurred at Bethel in 1889. In this year Bethel served as host for the synod meeting of the Concordia English District of the Joint Synod of Ohio. While the church had many times hosted synod sessions of the Tennessee Synod Reorganized, the Concordia District was more than double the size of their past synod. A. B. "Gus" Kiser fondly recalled the event. He recalled that on the "third Sunday in May, 1888, Bethel had the largest crowd she had ever witnessed. Every available space had a wagon or buggy on it, and every sapling had a horse or mule tied to it. The crowd was so large that many more people were on the outside than on the inside. Wagons were drawn up along each side of the church so that people could sit in them and see and hear what was going on inside. It was a great day for the people of Bethel." Mr. Kiser was incorrect only in the year. From May 15 until 20, 1889, Bethel hosted the Concordia English District's thirteenth convention. Rev. M. L. Carpenter of course was present and L. A. Shuford was listed as the delegate from his pastorate. Rev. George Hunt also attended. In all there were 7 pastors and 4 recognized delegates. Rev. H. K. G. Doermann was accepted by synod as a member since he had accepted the call as professor at St. Paul's Practical Seminary in Hickory. Rev. M. L. Carpenter then presented his theses

on the "Pastoral Call". He had been appointed at an earlier convention to write the theses. The first three theses had been adopted at the 1887 convention. The final six theses were discussed and adopted at the convention at Bethel. The convention discussed that a congregation should furnish a church building which "should not look like a barn." It should have a private place for a pastor to "make himself presentable and where he can be in seclusion to pray." It encouraged active worship by the membership while admitting that "the sermon is the main thing." The convention also encouraged all pastors to be more actively involved in mission work. After the treasurer's report which showed that synod was in debt \$40.25, synod passed a resolution "that a vote of thanks be extended to the people of Bethel Church and vicinity for their kindness and hospitality, and that the pastor loci announce the same to the congregation at the next regular service." One can only speculate about all the responsibilities held by the members. The ladies probably had to furnish food and refreshments continually. Since there was no water source at the church, members probably carried water from the home of Sylvannus Pasour. It is also assumed that members were called upon to provide room and board to all the pastors and delegates. The obvious pride with which Mr. Kiser writes concerning the event was certainly felt by all the members. The synod minutes closed with the parochial report. Rev. Carpenter listed three congregations and no mission. He listed 134 communicants, 16 infant baptisms, 2 adult baptisms, 5 confirmations, 4 marriages, 4 funerals, and no Sunday School. He listed the following financial statement: \$3.50 in general treasury; \$2.85 missions; \$5.25 for travelling expenses; \$7.27 for needy students; \$50 to the Hickory Seminary.¹⁵ Obviously Bethel had a wonderful experience with the synod session. It is also significant to note that the money contributed toward the seminary was very large. In fact it was the third highest total given by any charge listed in the report.

In 1890 Rev. Carpenter did not attend the District convention. Synod listed Rev. J. M. Senter as a newly received pastor. He was pastor at Peru, West Virginia. Rev. Carpenter did send a parochial report for the year. He listed three congregations and one mission. He listed 135 communicants, 24 infant baptisms, 1 adult baptism, 2 marriages, and 2 funerals. He also listed \$9.25 in the general treasury; \$13.50 in missions; \$5.16 as travelling expenses; and \$32.50 toward the Hickory Seminary. The Seminary donation was the second highest recorded in the report. On April 29, 1891, Rev. M. L. Carpenter attended the District convention at Patmos Church in the Shenandoah Valley of

Virginia. He listed no delegate with him. He listed his parochial report having 140 communicants, 22 infant baptisms, 9 confirmations, 2 marriages, 2 funerals, and one Sunday School. He listed \$5.45 for the district treasury; \$6.80 for the general treasury; \$3.45 for missions; \$6.81 for travelling expenses; \$5.38 for needy students; and \$90 for the Hickory Seminary, which was second highest in the report again. It is not clear why Rev. M. L. Carpenter left Bethel in 1891. He had been minister to the Bethel, Ebenezer, Luther Chapel, and Friday School House charge for 14 years. He had been a great asset to the congregation. He had led Bethel into expansion and had helped influence others to serve God as minister. One may speculate that since he attended synod in the Valley in 1891 that he was encouraged to make a change. He took the charge of three churches in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia later in 1891. He served there at Woodstock, Virginia, until 1903. His financial reward for his second charge was also not very great. His salary there was from \$250 to \$350.¹⁶ He had left Bethel congregation in good condition. The next minister Rev. Benjamin L. Westenberger was to find a congregation ready to serve the Lord.

1 Emanuel Carpenter Papers, A. B. "Gus" Kiser Collection, held by Clyde Kiser, Bessemer City, N. C. Kiser, "Bethel". "Gus" Kiser stated in "Bethel" that "erection of the [church] building was postponed until about 1868." However, in the communicant records held in his papers it stated "Additional communicant members after the congregation moved to the present site of Bethel Church, in the old log building erected in 1860." A log building was erected first, then a frame structure later. Kiser-Carpenter Chronicle, pp. 138-140. A copy of the Jonas Senter contract and the Communicant lists appear on these pages. In addition the editors Clyde V. and Alna L. Kiser note that obviously the first church was the log structure built by Senter. In Bethel Lutheran Churchbook I under Record of Interesting and Important Events it is recorded that "about 1876 or 77 a frame church was erected". The source of this statement is assumed to be Rev. Westenbarger. It cannot be determined which date is correct since no contemporary source has been located.

2 Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod Reorganized, (Hickory Tavern, N. C.: Carolina Eagle Office, 1872), pp. 1-6, located at Lutheran Synod House, Salisbury.

3 Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod (Reorganized), (Bristol, Tenn.: "Courier" Print, 1874), p. 2, 4, located in the private collection of Mrs. Sarah Watts of Route 1, Bessemer City, N. C. The Minutes for 1872 and 1873 were printed together. Obituary of Rev. George L. Hunt in the Ohio Synod Minutes 1911.

4 Ibid., pp. 5-6, 8-10. Samuel Jacob Carpenter was buried in the Michael Carpenter Cemetery. Apparently no cemetery existed at Bethel at his time.

5 Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod Reorganized, (Printed by Dec. Jonas Pasour near Dallas, N. C., 1876), pp. 1-9, located in private hands by Mrs. Eleanor P. Friday of Rt. 1, Dallas, N. C.

6 Interview of James Pasour of Rt. 1, Dallas, N. C. by the author, June 3, 1990. James stated that a notation in the old Antioch Churchbook stated that M. L. Carpenter was ordained in their church. Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod (Reorganized), (Newton, N. C.: "Enterprise" Print, 1879), pp. 2-5, located at Lutheran Synod House, Salisbury. Minutes for 1877 and 1879 were printed together. Part of these minutes were cut out or torn. Churchbook I.

7 Ibid., pp. 6, 9-10. Points of Difference runs for 39 pages.

8 Rhyne, "Tennessee Synod Reorganized", pp. 28-33, 63. Bible located at Bethel Church.

9 Henkel, Tenn. Synod, p. 221. Rhyne, "Tennessee Synod Reorganized", pp. 44-45. James S. Pasour, "History of Antioch Evangelical Lutheran Church", (September 2, 1962 at Antioch Church, Rt. 1, Dallas, N. C.)

10 Rhyne, "Tennessee Synod Reorganized", pp. 47-49. Ohio Synod Minutes 1884, (Bx 8061.0312 A2 1884), located at Trinity Seminary, Columbus, Ohio.

11 Rhyne, "Tennessee Synod Reorganized", pp. 47, 50-52. Ohio Synod Minutes 1885, 1886. It is probable in 1886 that synod recorded one of Rev. Carpenter's delegates incorrectly: L. C. Huffman. Synod minutes listed J. E. Thornburg as one of Rev. Hunt's delegates. Thornburg was known to have been a member of Bethel and later St. Pauls, Hardin. Rev. R. E. Golladay, "History of Concordia District of Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States", Synod Minutes 1902 (Bx 8061.0312 A2 1902) located at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, pp. 51-52.

12 Ibid., pp. 53-56. Life Sketches, p. 180. Ohio Synod Minutes 1887, 1888.

13 Kiser, "Bethel".

14 Ibid. E. E. & M. L. Deppen, Counting Kindred, (Myerstown, Pa.,: Church Center Press, 1940), pp. 301-302. Life Sketches, p. 36. Golladay, "History of Concordia District", p. 50. Paper located in private hands and found at Mrs. Wade Carpenter Sr., Rt. 6, Lincolnton, N. C.

15 Kiser, "Bethel". Ohio Synod Minutes 1889.

16 Kiser, "Bethel". Deppen Counting Kindred, p. 301. Ohio Synod Minutes 1890, 1891.

Chapter 5

OUT OF TRAGEDY - A NEW BRICK CHURCH

In 1891 Rev. Benjamin L. Westenbarger became pastor at Bethel. Little is known of his first year of ministry. Early the next year tragedy struck the congregation. On Saturday afternoon March 4, 1892, Rev. Westenbarger was conducting catechism. "It was discovered that the church was on fire, and because of the strong wind it was impossible to save the building." Everyone worked to salvage what they could. By "hard work [they] saved the windows, the stove, and some of the benches. The consuming flames soon reduced the building to ashes." On March 10 Westenbarger had a notice printed in the LINCOLN COURIER. In it he gave the above information. He also noted that "this is a great loss to Bethel congregation for she is not strong either in membership or in wealth. We beg all kind friends who love the Gospel and have a church house to remember us."¹ It is not known whether the advertisement produced any outside money or support.

On June 5, 1892, Rev. Benjamin L. Westenbarger was ordained a minister and installed as the pastor at Bethel Church by Professor H. K. G. Doermann and Rev. L. J. S. Carpenter. He found no church records "to show who were my members and what their respective standing in congregational work was. . . ." He did locate "an old book" which had been used since 1861 as a record for communicants. It had no record of baptisms, marriages, or deaths. The record itself only listed the head of a household and the number of communicants without listing the individual persons. "With great difficulty . . . [he] gathered a few scattered items and placed them in this book which has become the property of Bethel Congregation since Dec. 4, 1892." In the new church-book Westenbarger recorded during 1892 four infant baptisms, two burials, and 82 communicants on October 2. During this same year he was received as a member of the Concordia English District from St. Pauls Seminary in Hickory. He attended the Synod session.² As the year 1892 ended, the congregation faced the serious challenge of rebuilding its church with the leadership of

its young minister.

Soon after the church burned the decision was made to continue to have services. With no church Marious Sylvannus, called "Van", Pasour volunteered his home which was only a short distance from the burned ruins. His offer was accepted. For the rest of 1892 and into 1893 services were held in his home on a regular basis. The church officers took the lead in planning for a new church. They were president, John F. Carpenter; elders, John Goldsworthy, W. Sidney Carpenter, John Setzer; secretary, John Summey Jr.; treasurer, John F. Kiser. The congregation decided to build a new church, a new brick church. Without insurance and with limited funds John F. Carpenter and the officers challenged the members to build the church themselves. John Carpenter volunteered to oversee the brick work.³ Others agreed to help.

It is not known when construction began. It has been passed down that the work went slowly. The farmers worked when they could not till the soil. They met together and worked. It seemed that they would not complete the task. Under the large oak trees they would rest, then they would pray. They prayed that God would give them the strength to complete their task. Polly Carpenter Wylie recalled that her grandfather, John F. Carpenter, laid the brick and Sylvannus Pasour handed him the brick. The bricks were hand made. They were made along the small stream behind "Van" Pasour's home and transported the short distance to the church. On September 3, 1893, the cornerstone was laid by Rev. Westenbarger. As soon as the roof was put on, Rev. Westenbarger led services with his faithful followers in the new church. Apparently this occurred in the summer of 1894. "By the summer of '94 the building was in such shape that it could be used as a place of worship; but it was not completed till the summer of '98, --the dedication took place August 21st."⁴

For the year 1893 Westenbarger listed 11 infant baptisms, two marriages, and two burials. One of the marriages was of Frederick Carpenter, a member since 1858, to M. E. Froneberger. One of the burials was of Philip Kiser, another member since 1858. On January 15 he listed 35 communicants, and on April 16 he recorded 57 communicants. On January 10, 1893, Rev. Benjamin Westenbarger copied the church constitution in the Churchbook. Thirty-nine men signed as subscribing to the constitution. On May 25 Rev. Westenbarger and Caleb Carpenter, a member of Bethel, attended the Concordia English District Convention at Miller's Church in Hickory. In the printed parochial report Westenbarger listed that he served three churches and three missions.

He conducted one Sunday School. His congregations totalled 157 communicants, 46 voting members, 22 infant baptisms, three marriages, 7 funerals, a total of \$21.63 in the general treasury, \$6.79 in the district treasury, \$25 for travelling expenses, and 8 Lutheran Standards.⁵ There was excitement at Bethel. The new church was truly an outstanding structure.

Services were held in the new brick Bethel Church as early as the summer of 1894. A. B. "Gus" Kiser did not know how long it took to finish the church but noted that it took "several years before the church was finished." He recorded that four persons gave "indispensible" services during this period. They were John F. Carpenter, Alex Carpenter, M. Sylvannus Pasour, and Rev. Westenbarger. During 1894 Rev. Westenbarger recorded four infant baptisms, one marriage, and five burials. On March 18, 1894, the following church officers were installed: John F. Carpenter, president; C. Sylvannus Carpenter, secretary; Larkin Pasour, treasurer; elders, John Setzer, John F. Kiser, Sylvannus Pasour. On April 29 he communed 54 persons. On July 25 Rev. Westenbarger attended the Concordia English District Convention at Dovesville, Virginia. His address was listed as Crouse, NC. He turned in a parochial report which stated that he served three congregations and three missions. He listed 150 communicant members, 250 communions, 50 voting members, 19 infant baptisms, 18 confirmations, 2 received otherwise, 2 marriages, \$9.00 in general treasury, \$1 in Orphan's Home, \$2.35 in district treasury, and 10 Lutheran Standards. On December 16, 1894, Rev. Westenbarger confirmed a rather large confirmation class which included Harriette Roda Brown Pasour, George Ena Goldsworthy, Lucy Ella Kiser, John Alexander Kiser, Augustus Burtiss Kiser, John Edward Carpenter, Ida Luvina Carpenter, Alice Luella Carpenter, Barbara Sarah Ellen Eaker, Mary Malinda Etta Eaker, and Vesta Lathan Costner. On the same day he resigned his pastorate at Bethel.⁶ It was a sad day. Rev. Westenbarger had given good leadership to the congregation during a very difficult time. As he left, he knew that he left a revived congregation and an attractive church building.

The church was a prominent brick structure. Originally it had a rectangle plan with a small room located on the south side behind where the current adult choir now sits. "Tennessee" John F. Carpenter was the overseer of the masonry work. The foundation was of "a double course of rubble stone", and the brick was "laid in common bond with varying ratios". A square projection formed the entrance which supported the steeple. At least one person indicated that the steeple was not original. From all other sources if it

was not original, it must have been built very soon after the main portion of the church. Above the entrance reads the following in stone: "BETHEL E. LUTH CHURCH 1893". The steeple was covered with patterned tin shingles. Along both the north and south walls were three windows and one window each on the east side of the building. At least one contemporary described the church as being "plain". It was a "shell of a church and benches".⁷ But the congregation looked on their plain church with great pride.

On September 19, 1895, the 19th Concordia English District met at St. Marks's Church in Claremont. Rev. J. H. Wannemacher was listed from "Carpenter, N. C."; yet, Jacob Brown was listed as a delegate from a "Vacant charge in Lincoln and Gaston Co., N. C." Rev. Westenbarger had left Bethel and "his charge in Gaston Co., N. C., on account of lack of support" to assume leadership of the mission congregation at Hardin. Professors from St. Paul's Seminary in Hickory supplied the charge. On November 17, 1895, Rev. J. H. Wannemacher was installed as pastor at Bethel by Professor Doermann. Rev. Wannemacher had probably supplied Bethel during 1895 since he was without a charge. There were eight infant baptisms and two burials recorded. In 1896 Rev. Wannemacher recorded six infant baptisms and three burials. On March 15 he listed 49 communicants and on August 2 listed 63 communicants. These rather high numbers suggest increased interest in the church. The church officers for 1896 were president, John F. Carpenter; secretary, L. J. S. Carpenter; treasurer, P. S. Carpenter; elders, J. E. Senter, C. Sylvannus Carpenter, and Sylvannus Pasour. On October 14, 1896, Rev. Wannemacher attended the District Convention at Calvary, Virginia which was the pastorate of Rev. M. L. Carpenter. At this session Wannemacher was elected secretary.⁸

During this time most persons in the Bethel community were farmers. Fred Rash recalled another occupation which flourished about this period. The Sulphur Mine was located across from Bethel Church down at a spring behind the present home (1990) of Ted Rudisill. The Mine had a number of employees and also operated a company store. Another interesting aspect of the area around the Sulphur Mine was the large number of buzzard nests. Fred Rash recalled seeing his first buzzard nest there when he was a small boy.⁹

Another important event occurred in 1896. On September 20, 1896, Rev. Westenbarger officially organized a new church after a sermon at Hardin School House. Rev. Westenbarger had continued to preach at Friday's School House (also called Kettle Shoals School) when he was minister at Bethel. He later moved services to the Hardin School. This new church became St. Paul's

Evangelical Lutheran. The following members from Bethel joined the new church: Daniel Thornburg, John A. Friday, Mrs. John A. Friday, Mrs. William P. Friday, Miss Sallie E. Thornburg, Mrs. E. S. Costner, Mrs. Andrew Cloninger.¹⁰ They would be missed at Bethel.

During the year 1897 there was only slight changes in the church officers: president, P. S. Carpenter; secretary, L. J. S. Carpenter; treasurer, Frank Pasour; elders, J. E. Senter, John F. Carpenter, and Sylvannus Pasour. Rev. Wannemacher recorded six infant baptisms and three burials. On April 18 he listed 48 communicants and on October 17 listed 67 communicants. On August 4, 1897, Rev. Wannemacher attended Concordia English District meeting. His address was listed as Lincolnton, N. C. His parochial report listed three congregations and one mission station. He listed 52 voting members, 157 confirmed members, 118 members communed once during the year, 10 infant baptisms, 7 children and 3 adults confirmed, one Sunday School with 3 teachers and 31 pupils, and 11 Lutheran Standards.¹¹

Apparently the same church officers continued into 1898. During 1898 there were ten infant baptisms. The church saw one marriage and five burials. Two funerals were greatly mourned by the congregation. Emanuel Carpenter and his wife Catharine both died. It was Emanuel Carpenter who had led the small group of Lutherans at the "Old Log Church" and had seen the congregation grow and build its own church. He was greatly missed. On May 15 Rev. Wannemacher listed 58 communicants and on August 21 listed 39 communicants. From August 17-23, 1898, Bethel Church again hosted the annual convention of the Concordia English District of the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States. Rev. J. H. Wannemacher and Bethel hosted the twenty-second such synod session. The delegate from our parish was L. J. S. Carpenter, a member from Bethel. Rev. Michael L. Carpenter returned home to attend the session from his Calvary, Virginia parish. His son, Rev. R. M. Carpenter, also returned to his home congregation from his parish in Needmore, West Virginia. At the convention there were 13 pastors and six lay delegates who attended. The Minutes noted that "the sessions of Synod were exceedingly well attended by the members and friends of the local congregation. At each session about a hundred and more were present, and on Sunday at the Communion and Dedicatory services the attendance easily reached eight hundred." Certainly this large crowd of Lutherans exceeded anything the newly built brick church had seen or would ever see. Even though Rev. Wannemacher was listed as pastor from the parish, the Minutes noted that on April 17, 1898 he had accepted a call to St. Paul's, Hardin. The convention elected Rev. M. L. Carpenter as

its vice president. Synod discussed that the Concordia District treasury was indebted to the amount of \$142.74. The District continued its support of older and retired ministers, the beloved Rev. George L. Hunt and Rev. W. M. Sibert. The convention suggested that churches organize Sunday Schools into primary grade, intermediate grade, and senior grade and suggested materials for each grade level. The convention elected its representatives to the Joint Synod of Ohio meeting. Bethel's own L. J. S. Carpenter was elected as a lay delegate. The sessions at Bethel were held from 9:30 AM to 12:00 noon and from 1:30 PM until 4:00 PM. It is logical to assume that members from Bethel served lunch each day of the session. On Sunday, August 21, 1898, "Bethel church, in which Synod convened, was dedicated to the service of the Triune God, by Rev. J. H. Wannemacher, Rev. J. H. Rexrode and Hugh H. Ackler assisting. Rev. E. L. S. Tressel [synod president] preached the dedicatory sermon. Text: 2 Cor. 6:16." "Synod gave expression of her appreciation and thanks for the generous hospitality enjoyed while the guest of Bethel congregation and her pastor by a rising vote." During the session the members of Bethel heard its own Rev. M. L. Carpenter preach a "Confessional Sermon" based upon Romans 7:7-9. Without a doubt the congregation of Bethel rejoiced in the dedication of its new church and in the excitement which the synod session brought. The parochial report for 1898 listed each congregation separately. Bethel was listed with 175 baptized members, 31 voting members, 90 confirmed members, and 68 communing members. The financial report listed the church building worth \$1500 and other property worth \$22. Bethel furnished \$119.25 for the pastor's salary and \$225 in other expenses. Bethel was indebted to \$48.25. Apparently Bethel had borrowed some money to complete its fine brick structure.¹²

Apparently Rev. Wannemacher continued to serve the pastorate into 1899. During 1899 there were five infant baptisms and one burial. On May 21 there were 41 communicants, and on November 19 there were 39 communicants. On May 21 Rev. Wannemacher confirmed the following persons: Ella Carpenter, Venie Carpenter, Emma V. Carpenter, Minnie Carpenter, Minnie Ida Carpenter, Minnie May Carpenter, Eila Carpenter, Minnie Kiser, Lillie Willis, and Sallie E. Rennols. During this year Bethel lost one of its most faithful members as L. J. S. Carpenter left the church to serve as a full-time pastor in Caldwell County, N. C. On May 24 Rev. Wannemacher listed his address as Hickory, N. C. He gave his parochial report for his past parish. Bethel was listed with 182 baptized members, 31 voting members, 89 confirmed members, and 69 communing members. Bethel listed its other property as \$116, \$100 for pastor's salary, and \$5 for

other expenses. On January 5, 1899, Bethel congregation joined with its charge in purchasing a town lot in Lincolnton. The purpose was apparently to build a parsonage. On that date Samuel and Alice Lander sold a lot for \$100 to J. L. Thornburg, Ephraim Carpenter, and Andrew Brown, "Trustees of Luther Chapel, Bethel, and Ebenezer churches of the Ohio Synod and their successors". The land was next to the Catholic church property. On December 22, 1900, a mortgage was taken on this property for the amount of \$156. The same three signed. The mortgage listed all three as "Trustees of Bethel Lutheran Church of Gaston County" which was a mistake in the deed. They mortgaged the property to D. A. Thornburg so they could repay J. L. Thornburg the debt. The conditions of the mortgage was that the amount would be repaid with 6% interest due January 1, 1902.¹³ Apparently work was to begin on the parsonage.

On April 21, 1900, Rev. G. A. Derhammer was installed as pastor of Bethel Church by Rev. Westenbarger. According to A. G. "Gus" Kiser, it was during Derhammer's pastorate that "the first parsonage in which Bethel had an interest was built at Lincolnton, North Carolina." In 1900 there were eight infant baptisms and two burials. During Convention in May Rev. Derhammer was received into the Concordia English District. In 1901 he baptized only one infant. On September 18 he attended the District Convention with delegate A. L. Thornburg. Rev. Derhammer gave his parochial report which listed for his parish: 200 baptized members, 75 voting members, 125 entitled to communion, 100 communing members, 2 adults buried, 9 children confirmed, 12 infants baptized, 5 children buried, and 3 marriages. He listed the financial records for the whole parish. It included \$500 for the parsonage with \$345 indebtedness. The pastor's salary for the parish was listed as \$200. In 1902 only one infant baptism was recorded. Rev. Derhammer left the congregation in 1902. He was the first to live in the parsonage in Lincolnton.¹⁴

Sometime between 1901 and 1906 the parish to which Bethel belonged changed dramatically. Probably when Rev. Derhammer left the parish in 1902, Ebenezer, which became St. Paul's Crouse, left the parish and the Concordia English District. In 1901 the Tennessee Synod which met at Lutheran Chapel, Gastonia had the following churches in the area under its jurisdiction: St. Marks, Philadelphia, Lutheran Chapel, St. Johns, Antioch, Christ, College Chapel (later Holy Communion), Mt. Holly, and Gastonia in Gaston County; Daniels, Trinity, Salem, Bethphage, St. Luke, Sharon, Cedar Grove, David's Chapel, and Emmanuel in Lincoln County. In 1906 when Rev. Senter sent his parochial report to the Concordia English District, he listed his churches as Bethel, St. Pauls, St.

Peters, and Luther's Chapel. As early as 1904 he had listed his address as Dallas. He apparently lived in the new parsonage which had been built near St. Pauls, Hardin. It is not known what became of the parsonage which had been built in Lincolnton for the parish of Ebenezer, Bethel, and Luther's Chapel. In 1908 Rev. E. H. Kohn reported to the Tennessee Synod on his parish which included St. Marks, St. Johns, Bethphage, and St. Pauls. The organization date for St. Pauls was listed as 1904 which may suggest that is the date the new church located in Crouse joined the Tennessee Synod. The reason for this split is not known. When reviewing the records of the Tennessee Synod, it is obvious that it based much of its support in the Gaston and Lincoln County, North Carolina area. In 1901 the Tennessee Synod sponsored Lenoir College in Hickory, Gaston College in Dallas, and Cherryville Parochial School in Cherryville. It sent its young men to Southern Seminary to be educated in the ministry. It was truly involved in church activities in this area. It is likely that these reasons contributed to the joining of St. Pauls (Ebenezer) to the Tennessee Synod at this time and encouraged Bethel to consider such a move.¹⁵

Rev. Derhammer was succeeded by a native son of the congregation, Rev. Jonas Senter. It was his father, Jonas Sr., who was a member in 1858 and who had the contract to build the log church at its present location in 1860. He was greeted by the congregation with open arms. In 1903 Rev. Senter baptized 12 infants. He preached the funeral of Mary Jane Kiser, who was buried at the Kiser Graveyard. On May 17 he listed 51 communicants. It was also in 1903 that Rev. Michael Luther Carpenter returned from his pastorate in Virginia. He was unable to make ends meet with his meager salary. His wife Caroline "Callie" Senter Carpenter was also ill. He returned home to nurse her to health and to farm on the old homestead. In 1904 Rev. Senter baptized eleven infants. There were three burials, of which one was Larkin Kiser. On September 21, 1904, Rev. Senter, whose address was given as Dallas, N. C., and delegate M. L. Thornburg attended the Concordia District meeting. Rev. Senter listed that the parsonage was worth \$900. In 1905 there was only one infant baptism recorded. On April 30 he listed 65 communicants. In 1905 Rev. Senter did not attend synod but sent a parochial report. He listed serving four congregations with 424 baptized members, 80 voting members, and 225 entitled to communion. He indicated that communion was held four times a year, that one member had withdrawn and 30 had been received, that 21 children and 5 adults were confirmed, that 16 children and 4 adults were baptized, that 4 children were buried, and that 4

Sunday Schools were held with 10 teachers and 175 pupils. Senter listed the value of churches to be \$3000, the parsonage \$900, and \$100 for other property. He listed congregational indebtedness as \$75, his salary as \$345, current expenses as \$15, and other expenses as \$40. He listed \$7 in the congregational general treasury, \$19.15 going to home missions, and \$12 going into the district treasury. Also in 1905 a document has survived which sheds light on how Bethel paid its pastor. On March 1 twenty-three church members pledged at least \$53.00 and "promist to pay they amount next to our names for pastors salary".¹⁶

In 1906 Rev. Senter baptized nine infants at Bethel. He attended the Concordia English District meeting with D. A. L. Pasour as the delegate from his charge. In the parochial report he listed his four congregations as Bethel, St. Peter's, St. Paul's, and Luthers Chapel. His parochial report showed increases in all categories. He listed 180 members who communed once, 4 burials, 9 members received, 3 children confirmed, 15 infants baptized, 6 children buried, and 5 marriages. He listed 3 Sunday Schools with 7 teachers and 150 pupils. The financial report was alike in most cases. Congregational indebtedness was listed as \$125. In 1907 he baptized five infants and on July 21 listed 40 communicants. On September 18 Rev. Senter attended the synod meeting of the Concordia District in Washington, D. C. His parochial report differed little from the previous year: 6 burials, 2 members received, 19 children confirmed, 15 infants baptized, 3 children buried, and 6 marriages. He listed two Sunday Schools with 26 teachers and 236 pupils. In 1908 the Churchbook listed only four infants as being baptized. He attended the Concordia English District Synod meeting with delegate G. Loy Carpenter, a member of Bethel. In 1908 Rev. Senter submitted his parochial report by congregation. For Bethel Church he listed 220 baptized members, 25 voting members, 108 entitled to communion, 2 burials, 2 members received, one child confirmed and 4 adults confirmed, 10 infants baptized, 2 children buried, and one marriage. Bethel had a Sunday School with 3 teachers and 65 pupils. There were six subscriptions to the Lutheran Standard. He listed the value of the church as being \$1500 and Bethel's share of his salary as \$115.¹⁷

From 1909 to 1910 there is no record of church activity in the Churchbook. It is assumed that the reason was poor record keeping. In 1909 Rev. Senter attended synod with delegate L. A. Thornburg. His parochial report for this year differed slightly from the previous year for Bethel: He listed 195 baptized members, 36 voting members, 106 entitled to commune, 80 who communed once during the year, and 200 total communicants. He listed that at Bethel

he buried one member, received 2 members, confirmed 2 children, confirmed 5 adults, and baptized 9 infants. The Sunday School remained the same. The financial report for Bethel remained unchanged except that Bethel was listed with expenses of \$133, and Bethel gave \$3.48 to the general treasury and \$10.40 to home missions. On June 22, 1910, Rev. Senter attended Concordia District synod meeting. Rev. Senter submitted the following parochial report for Bethel: 202 baptized members, 40 voting members, 118 entitled to communion, 85 communing at least once, and 215 total communed. He listed 1 member received, 12 children confirmed, 7 infants baptized, and 1 child buried. He listed 3 Sunday School teachers with 60 pupils. The financial report for Bethel listed \$25 value of other property, \$180 in congregational expense, and \$571 in the general treasury. The congregational benevolence for Bethel listed \$5 for Students' Beneficiary Fund, \$7.42 to the District Treasury, and \$14 to other purposes.¹⁸

At about this time Rev. Senter began to consider changing synodical affiliations. As early as 1910 Rev. J. M. Senter attended the Tennessee Synod meeting which was held at Emmanuel's Church in Lincolnton. He and others "were made advisory members and invited to seats within the bar of Synod." At that session the Tennessee Synod discussed its future merger with the North Carolina Synod which was to become a part of a merger to create the United Lutheran Church in America. Apparently Rev. Jonas Senter's attendance to the 1910 synod session convinced him that he and his churches should sever its relationship with the Concordia District of the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States and should join the Tennessee Synod. On September 20-23, 1911, the Tennessee Synod held its regular synod meeting at St. Peter's Church, Shenandoah, Virginia. The committee on letters and petitions reported on a letter written by Rev. J. M. Senter. In it Rev. Senter stated that the four congregations he served had "withdrawn from the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States". He asked "how they may unite with our Synod." The committee recommended that "the officers of Synod be authorized to receive these congregations" between synod meetings. The entire synod approved the recommendation. An additional by-law was added to the constitution to allow for such interim admission. This by-law was adopted by the synod.¹⁹

While Rev. Senter considered his move to the Tennessee Synod, he planned to contact the Concordia English District. On July 24, 1911, Rev. J. M. Senter of Dallas, N. C. informed synod that the congregations which he served had voted unanimously to be withdrawn from the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States. He listed his congregations as "Bethel Congregation, Long Shoals, N. C.; Luther

Chapel Congregation, Lincolnton, N. C.; St. Peter's Congregation, Dallas, N. C.; and St. Paul's Congregation, Worth, N. C." In addition Rev. Senter decided to "cast his lot with this independent charge, and therefore also severed his connection with our Synod." During September of 1911 J. E. A. Doermann, as directed by the Concordia District president, made "a friendly visit to Rev. J. M. Senter, Dallas, N. C." Doermann spent a day attempting to "prevail upon him to withdraw his resignation from our synod". Doermann reported to the 1912 synod meeting that he had been unsuccessful in his persuasion. In addition Doermann reported that Rev. M. L. Carpenter had become a member of the Tennessee Synod. He suggested that Rev. Carpenter's name be dropped from the Concordia District roll. The reasons for the synodical switch is not known. Time had apparently healed the wounds caused by the Rev. Adam Miller controversy. It is also probable that at this point in time the Tennessee Synod could better care for the congregation than the Joint Synod of Ohio. For example St. Paul's Seminary in Hickory had closed while the Tennessee Synod sponsored Lenoir College and Southern Seminary. In later years the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States would combine with other bodies to become the American Lutheran Church. Only recently has the American Lutheran Church combined with the Lutheran Church in America to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. At the time of the switch in Synods, a parsonage "was purchased at Crouse."²⁰ The parsonage at St. Pauls Hardin would continue to serve that congregation.

On November 6, 1912, the Tennessee Synod held its regular session at St. Jacob's Church in Chapin, South Carolina. Rev. J. M. Senter of Lexington, N. C. was listed as a pastor as was Rev. M. L. Carpenter of Long Shoals, N. C., who was listed as absent. The synod reported that on January 24, 1912 Rev. J. M. Senter was received into the Tennessee Synod. On April 20, 1912, Rev. M. L. Carpenter was received into the Tennessee Synod from the Ohio Synod. On January 24, 1912, the following churches were received from the Ohio Synod: "Bethel congregation, Gaston county, N. C.", "Luther Chapel congregation, Gaston county, N. C." [should have been Lincoln County], and "St. Paul congregation, N. C." There was no statistical data for our congregation or the other two congregations in the 1912 report. No further information was given. James Pasour stated that at this time St. Peters congregation combined with Antioch. Ann Dellinger stated that Luthers Chapel, located on Highway 321 North of Lincolnton continued to exist until the 1940's. However, it was small and was usually served by supply pastors. Preaching was held in the afternoons on the second and fourth Sundays.²¹

It was also during the pastorate of Rev. Senter that Elizabeth "Lizzie" Carpenter Heishmann, at that time the unmarried daughter of Rev. M. L. Carpenter, recalled her memories of Bethel Church. She played the old pedal organ at Bethel for eight years. It was cold on the winter mornings when she would ride the buggy to church to play for the church. She recalled "old Bethel Church" as being plain. She recalled that it did not have a bell in it. Later improvements would make it look better. Despite their move home her mother, Caroline Senter Carpenter, died on June 10, 1904. Elizabeth "Lizzie" Carpenter Heishmann recalled doing most of the housework, even though her brothers would occasionally help her. She recalled when her father took his final pastorate in the Boone, N. C. area where he served five congregations for a total salary of about \$400. It was also about this time or a little earlier that Ed Harmon and Ransom Kiser recalled coming to Bethel Church. They recalled riding in the family buggy or on the wagon to church. They left home and went down the road to where Fred Metcalf's Store is currently (1990) located. They then turned right on the main road going toward Dallas. They turned off the main road onto a small muddy road which ran near where Howard Carpenter currently lives. They recalled going down a steep hill and fording a small branch. They then travelled past "Mr. Van's old houseplace", Sylvannus Pasour. Ed Harmon recalled with amusement how Sylvannus Pasour would surround his garden spot with pine bark pailings which were stuck into the ground. He said he could still picture the sight. He also recalled seeing so many bird nests as the family wagon passed through the woods on their journey to church. Ransom Kiser recalled a story about Columbus Harmon, Ed Harmon's father. Columbus Harmon rode to church on the mule. He got out of church and as was customary talked a long time with his church neighbors after church. He then walked home. When he arrived home, he realized that he had left his mule at Bethel. So he had to walk back to church to get his mule.²² Growing up in Bethel congregation was lots of fun.

In 1911 Rev. Senter recorded one infant baptism and only one baptism was listed for 1912. Rev. Jonas Senter was much loved by the congregation and would return to preach and visit. Mr. Ransom Kiser recalled that as he grew up, his family always made a point to go to church to hear Rev. Senter preach. On October 1, 1913, the Tennessee Synod held its regular session at Holy Trinity Church in Hickory, N. C. which was the church of Rev. J. H. Wannemacher, the former minister of Bethel while in the Ohio Synod. Rev. J. C. Dietz of Crouse, N. C. attended the synod with J. F. Carpenter of Bethel Church as the lay delegate. Rev. Dietz had accepted the call to the Crouse parish on January 1, 1913.

The inclusion of Bethel, St. Pauls, Hardin, and Luther's Chapel created some organizational problems for the synod. These problems were solved thusly. St. Johns Cherryville chose to "support its own pastor" at the beginning of the year and called Rev. B. D. Wessinger. Rev. Dietz, who had served the pastorate of St. Marks, St. Pauls, Bethphage, and St. Johns, assumed leadership of the new parish composed of St. Marks, St. Pauls Crouse, Bethphage, and Bethel, "a congregation until recently belonging to the Ohio Synod." On June 29, 1913, St. Pauls, Worth [now called Hardin], dedicated their house of worship which underwent extensive improvements. The Church of the Resurrection, a Tennessee Synod church located nearby, was abandoned and its congregation merged with St. Pauls. In addition the Crouse pastorate provided a parsonage in Crouse for its minister, Rev. Dietz. The Minutes reported that Bethel had not paid its \$12 apportionment. Synod adopted a model constitution for its churches at the session. The parochial reports for the year indicated that J. F. Carpenter was secretary of the Church Council and that M. S. Pasour was the church treasurer for Bethel. No superintendent of Sunday School was reported. For Bethel Rev. Dietz listed 94 active members, 80 confirmed members, 40 baptized members and adults not confirmed, and 134 total membership. He listed 8 confirmations, 20 catechumens, 2 infant baptisms, 3 transfers into the congregation, 2 transfers out of the congregation, 6 teachers of Sunday School with 62 scholars. He listed the value of the church property as \$2800, the local expenses as \$295.87, conference fund \$11, and with an average of \$3.83 per member.²³ Bethel attempted to make the transition from the Ohio Synod to the Tennessee Synod.

In the Churchbook for 1913 Dietz baptized three infants. On July 13 he listed 56 communicants and confirmed the following new members: Odus Paysour, Alda Paysour, Allie Zoe Kiser, Laura Elizabeth Harmon, Mary Susan Kiser, Ora Froneberger, Lula Summey, Mrs. Susie Summey, Mrs. Ocie Kiser (by letter), and Pendar Weathers. On August 10 officers for Bethel congregation were installed. They included president, P. S. Carpenter; secretary, M. A. Carpenter; treasurer, M. S. Payseur; elders, J. A. Kiser, M. L. Kiser, J. E. Carpenter. In 1914 there was only one infant baptism recorded, and it was done by Rev. Senter. Mr. Ed Harmon said that Rev. Dietz was the first minister he could remember. He recalled him to be rather tall and related the story when his family had the Dietz family over for Sunday dinner that Rev. Dietz's son pushed Ed into the woodbox. On March 1, 1914, Rev. J. C. Dietz accepted the call to the Gastonia pastorate and left Bethel and the Crouse pastorate. Synod reported that Bethel paid \$2.75 on its \$12 apportionment which was more than any of the other churches

in the pastorate. Bethel also paid \$2 on its back apportionment. Bethel recorded the same church officers as last year. The statistical report was identical to the previous year. Apparently Rev. Dietz was the first minister to live in the parsonage at Crouse. The "members and friends of Bethel E. L. Church" made pledges to pay for the parsonage at Crouse. Forty-Eight persons pledged \$146.20. Of this amount \$117.30 was recorded as paid.²⁴ The members had faith that they would pay their share of the expense for the new parsonage.

On October 31, 1915, Rev. B. D. Wessinger, the pastor of St. Johns Cherryville who apparently was a supply pastor, confirmed the following class: Vera Vivian Carpenter, Samuel Lee Carpenter, Lola Beatrice Carpenter, Zelda Luvenia Carpenter, Lela Zona Jane Pasour, Lula Pearl Pasour, Samuel Sylvanus Pasour, Lawrence Edward Pasour, Arrie Doerman Pasour, Clarence Bervie Pasour, and Oma Viola Summey. On October 13, 1915, the Tennessee Synod met at Mt. Tabor Church in New Brookland, S. C. The report for Bethel Church with Rev. O. W. Aderholdt as pastor included M. A. Carpenter as chairman of the Council, M. S. Pasour as treasurer, and Luther Kiser as superintendent of the Sunday School. The parochial report showed 80 active members, 96 confirmed members, 40 baptized children and adults not confirmed, 12 confirmations, 27 catechumens, 4 infant baptisms, 7 Sunday School officers and teachers, 60 Sunday School members. The value of the church property was \$2800 which was greater than the other churches in the parish. The local expenses totalled \$66.29. On November 1, 1915, Rev. O. W. Aderholdt was installed at Bethel Church. During that year three infants were baptized, and one marriage, Spargo Carpenter to Emma Lee Carpenter, was performed.²⁵

In 1916 only one infant baptism was recorded. On November 1, 1916, the Tennessee Synod held its regular session at the Church of the Good Shephard in Mt. Holly, N. C. Rev. Aderholdt attended as did "Hinson Harmon" from Bethel congregation. Rev. Aderholdt had accepted his call to the Crouse pastorate on November 1, 1915 and had been installed on August 27, 1916. Bethel was listed as having paid its entire apportionment of \$12 as did the other three churches in the parish. The synod also admitted Rev. R. M. Carpenter from the "Condordia District Synod of Ohio" into the Tennessee Synod. Bethel's church officers remained the same except that John A. Kiser was listed as Sunday School superintendent. Rev. Aderholdt listed for Bethel the following parochial report: 80 active members, 90 confirmed members, 130 total membership, 2 confirmations, 35 catechumens, 1 transfer out of the church, 1 death, 4 exclusions, 7 Sunday School teachers and 50 scholars, \$345 in local expenses, \$11.65 to Lenoir

College, \$15 to conference fund, \$12 to synodical fund, and an average of \$4.80 per member.²⁶

In 1917 Rev. Aderholdt baptized five infants. On August 12 he communed 70 persons. It is not known whether this was Homecoming Sunday. It is very possible that our Homecoming did start as early as 1917. It WAS Confirmation Sunday. On this day the following persons were confirmed into the church: Lawrence Carpenter, Onis Carpenter, Nancy Carpenter, Iva Lee Carpenter, Annie Mae Payseur, Will Payseur, Mary Lee Payseur, Mike Harmon, Jacob Kiser, Herbert Carpenter, Epsie Rudisill, Theo Carpenter, Carrie Lee Carpenter, Miller Paysour, Dock Kiser, Anderson Kiser, Augustus Kiser, Sam Kiser, Pearl Kiser, and Jona Froneberger. Epsie Rudisill Kiser recalled that Rev. Aderholdt was her favorite pastor because he taught her catechism. During this time catechism was held for a whole week in the mornings. Of course transportation was by wagon, buggy, or horse. She recalled that because there were four churches in the pastorate sermons were given every other Sunday. She walked to church and remembered "Van" Pasour teaching Sunday School in the back of the present church. She also recalled "Children's Day". It was held all day Saturday where a program was presented. Polly Carpenter Wylie also recalled Rev. Aderholdt. She remembered that Rev. Aderholdt would spend the week at her home for pay. She recalled that they would have to sleep on pallets. During this time Emma Lee Carpenter played the organ, and later Lizzie Harmon also played the organ. The old organ was recalled as having a tall back and pump.²⁷

It was also during the 1910's that the church finally got a bell to go in its steeple. Mr. Ed Harmon recalled that his father and another member approached Mr. D. E. "Dan" Rhyne about a bell for the church. He was convinced to donate the bell during this time. Prior to having a bell Mr. Ed Harmon recalled that a small handbell was located in the small room behind where the adult choir now sits, which is on the left side of the church. Ringing the handbell would signal the beginning of services. Mr. Ed Harmon also recalled that during the late teens the church was covered with wide board cedar shingles. He recalled that "someone from Kings Mountain donated" the shingles. The church of Ed Harmon's childhood differed from the church of today. An "old school house stove" which burned wood about 2½ feet long sat just in front of where the current children's choir now sits, which is on the right side of the church. What was remarkable was the long stovepipe which was held up with wire which ran to the flue. He recalled the windows were plain and that two iron rods were exposed running the width of the church. The rods were connected

in the middle with a metal piece and a nut on the end. He recalled that his first Sunday School teacher was Mavin Carpenter. In the old church there were no rooms for separate classes, so each class would get together in groups for Sunday School. It was a little noisy but was the best that could be done.²⁸

In 1918 Rev. Aderholdt recorded two infant baptisms and in 1919 he recorded three. On January 9, 1918, Rev. Michael Luther Carpenter died. He was buried in Bethel Cemetery. There is no record of his burial in the churchbook. Polly Carpenter Wylie recalled "Pastor Luther Carpenter" fondly. She noted that he died of cancer from a cancerous knot on his left arm. Sometime in 1919 Rev. Aderholdt left the congregation. Prior to leaving he confirmed the following confirmation class: Samuel Stroup, Pauline Carpenter, Hazel Carpenter, Henderson Kiser, and Oscar Kiser. Ed Harmon recalled that Rev. Aderholdt was a slender but not an especially big man. On September 10, 1919, the Tennessee Synod held its regular synod meeting. Rev. O. W. Aderholdt attended from the Crouse pastorate with N. A. Hoover who was the lay delegate. The parochial report for the year listed that for Bethel M. A. Carpenter served as both "secretary of council" and as the treasurer. Loy Carpenter was listed as the superintendent of the Sunday School. Bethel was listed with 95 active members and 105 confirmed members, 5 confirmations, 3 infant baptisms, 8 Sunday School teachers with 90 scholars, \$3000 value of the church property, local expenses of \$390.04, \$15 to the Orphans Home, \$15.50 to the Theological Seminary, \$4.25 to Lenoir College, \$15 conference fund, \$19.10 to home missions, \$53.38 to foreign missions, \$12 to synodical fund, \$28 to others, and averaging \$5.81 per member. During the session the Tennessee Synod adopted the constitution which would serve as the governing body for the union of the Tennessee and North Carolina Synods. Sometime during 1920 Rev. C. O. Lippard came to serve our church. It was during the pastorate of Rev. Lippard that the congregation saw the need for more room in the church. They wanted to add Sunday School Rooms onto the church. Very little is known about this construction. It was noted in the Churchbook by D. C. Kiser that the addition was build "by the men of Bethel congregation & supervised by Mr. Alex Carpenter."²⁹

In 1920 Rev. Lippard recorded six infant baptisms and one burial. On January 28, 1920, the following church officers were listed: president, M. A. Carpenter; secretary, Columbus Harmon (Anderson Kiser was elected to fill out his term); treasurer, G. Loy Carpenter; elders, J. D. Froneberger, W. C. Best, W. E. Kiser. On June 30, 1920, the "auditing committee of Bethel Congregation", P. S. Carpenter, J. D. Froneberger, and John A. Kiser, examined and audited the

treasurer's book. They found it to be correct. They recorded receipts of \$96.55 and disbursements of \$93.36 with a balance on hand of \$3.19. The disbursements included \$7.16 "Due on last quarter", \$1.50 for varnish on the church windows, \$2.50 to "J. E. Carpenter on bell", \$1.50 parsonage insurance, \$15.00 supply pastors, \$35.70 "Synodical apportionment", \$30 to Rev. Lippard. On October 12, 1920, the Tennessee Synod held its 100th annual session at Emmanuel's Lutheran Church in Lincolnton, N. C. It was at Emmanuel's Church in 1820 that the North Carolina Synod split with the followers of Rev. David Henkel, who then formed the Tennessee Synod. Rev. C. O. Lippard attended synod from the Crouse pastorate and William Kiser attended as a delegate from Bethel. On March 31, 1920, Rev. Aderholdt had resigned the Crouse pastorate, and on July 1, 1920, Rev. Lippard accepted the call to the Crouse pastorate. Synod recorded that Bethel had paid \$107.10 of its \$142.74 apportionment. The church officers were the same as listed in 1919. The parochial report for Bethel reported thusly: 154 baptized members, 106 confirmed members, 85 communing members, 5 infant baptisms, 2 confirmations, 1 death and 1 loss by certificate, 1 student in a Lutheran institution and 1 in a non-Lutheran school, 1 women's organization with 25 members, 1 young person's organization with 27 members, 9 Sunday School teachers with 98 scholars, 11 on the cradle roll, and \$34 in Sunday School benevolence. The report listed total contributions of \$903 during the year.³⁰

In 1921 Rev. Lippard baptized ten infants. He preached three funerals. On March 27 he recorded 72 communicants at Bethel Church. The congregation began to experience significant growth during this period. On November 13, 1921, he confirmed a large class of members: David Loy Froneberger, Clarence Burk Froneberger, Frank Beecher Best, Ollie Dulcenia Carpenter, Raymon Andrew Carpenter, Wilburn Hugh Carpenter, Jessie Pearl Huss, Walter Thomas Paysour, Henry Sidney Paysour, Edison Evan Paysour, Huston Charles Kiser, Kelley Monroe Kiser, and Ed Harmon.³¹

During 1921 a great event for Lutheranism occurred. After years of planning and preparation the United Lutheran Church in America was born. It was the union of a number of smaller Lutheran bodies. The body to which the Tennessee Synod belonged, the United Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the South, chose to join its northern neighbors from whom it had separated during the Civil War. One requirement for the creation of the United Lutheran Church in America was that a church would belong to the synod of its own state. In the case of Bethel Church it required that Bethel leave the Tennessee Synod and join the North Carolina Synod. What in effect happened was that the Tennessee Synod

actually dissolved itself because for a number of years the Tennessee Synod had no churches in Tennessee. Most of its churches were in North Carolina with smaller numbers in Virginia and South Carolina. What was also unique about the change was that the Tennessee Synod was almost three times the size of the North Carolina Synod. In 1900 the Tennessee Synod had 84 churches while the North Carolina Synod had 35 churches. So the united North Carolina Synod would prepare to serve its members and its churches through the leadership of Jacob L. Morgan.³²

In 1922 Rev. Lippard baptized four infants. He recorded four marriages and three burials. In 1923 he listed four infant baptisms and four burials. One funeral was of Catharine Elizabeth "Kate" Carpenter, who was listed as a member in 1858. She was buried in the Carpenter Family Cemetery. The practice of burying in private cemeteries had been on a decline for a number of years. At this time it was unusual not to be buried in the Bethel Cemetery. On August 12, 1923, Rev. Lippard confirmed Sylvanus Paul Carpenter, Ethel Augusta Kiser, Susan Eidello Froneberger, Earl Augustus Payseur, Hugh Theodore Payseur, and Miles Alexander Carpenter. In 1924 Rev. Lippard baptized three infants and recorded two burials. On August 10 he confirmed Flay Sidney Kiser, Burley Leonard Kiser, Mabel Inez Kiser, Mary Mozelle Carpenter, Claudia Mildred Payseur, Russel Franklin Payseur, and Lewis Franklin Carpenter. During the same year he left the pastorate. During this period financial records were divided between current expense and benevolences. A financial book for the year 1924 is quite informative. Disbursements from the benevolence account include \$3 per month to M. S. Pasour as "Janitor", money for "European Relief", \$8.50 for "wood for parsonage", \$1.50 for "window glass", \$7.50 "For insuring church to L. H. Kiser", money for supply pastors. In late 1924 Rev. R. M. "Burt" Carpenter, son of the congregation, supplied the church a number of times. On one occasion the current expense account had to borrow \$14 from "sunday school Treas. M. S. Pasour." On another occasion the benevolence account borrowed \$52.05 from the treasurer, Loy Carpenter.³³

Both Ed Harmon and Ransom Kiser recalled Rev. Lippard as being a heavy set man. About this time Fred Rash recalled travelling by Bethel Church in the bus ran by Eph Huffstetler. For \$.20 Fred could ride to Gastonia to see a movie and return later in the day. He remembered travelling on the old road which had big ruts, deep in mud. In fact he recalled that the worst place on the whole road seemed to be in front of Bethel Church. He recalled that the road always ran in front of the church and that Bethel was "the only thing on the

"road" at that time because there were no houses. On March 15, 1925, Rev. F. M. Speagle began his work at Bethel.³⁴ From 1893 until 1925 Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church congregation had experienced many changes. The frame church burned and was replaced with a handsome brick structure built by the membership. Bethel switched from the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States to the Tennessee Synod. Later Bethel joined the North Carolina Synod when the United Lutheran Church was established. Finally when the congregation needed Sunday School rooms, the membership added them to the church. Because of strong lay and pastoral leadership Bethel Church congregation had turned adversity into success.

1 Lincoln Courier, March 10, 1892, on microfilm at Lincoln County Library. Rev. E. E. Golladay, "History of Concordia District of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States", Ohio Synod Minutes 1902, (Bx 8061.0312 A2 1902), p. 50 located at Trinity Seminary, Columbus, Ohio gives the exact date of the fire as March 4, 1893. I believe that they were correct with the date but had the wrong year.

2 Bethel Lutheran Churchbook I. This first record book is not paged. It is divided into chapters: pastors, church officers, church members, baptism of infants, marriages, burials, communion seasons, summary, and record of interesting and important events occurring from time to time. Ohio Synod Minutes 1892, (Bx 8061.0312 A1892), located at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio.

3 Churchbook I. Kiser, "Bethel".

4 Interview with O. Claude Carpenter by the author, April 14, 1990, Route 1, Box 216, Bessemer City, N. C. Interview of Polly Carpenter Wylie by Diane Kiser Carpenter on June 17, 1989, Rt. 1, Blacksburg, S. C. Ohio Synod Minutes 1893, and Golladay, "History of Concordia District", p. 50.

5 Churchbook I. Ohio Synod Minutes 1893.

6 Kiser, "Bethel". Churchbook I. Ohio Synod Minutes 1894, and Golladay, "History of Concordia District", p. 50.

7 "Proposal of Bethel Lutheran Church, 1893 Cherryville Township to the Gaston County Historic Properties Register, Feb. 1988", Gaston County Historic Properties Commission, a copy may be found at the Gaston County Museum of Art & History, Dallas, N. C. and at the Gaston County Library, Gastonia, N. C. Interview with Claude Carpenter. Interview with Elizabeth Carpenter Heishmann, June 17, 1989 of Ft. Valley, Va. by the author. She was 100 years old at the time of the interview. She gave the contemporary opinion of the church and made the statement about the steeple. No other source suggests that the steeple was not original. Interview of Ed Harmon by the author on December 28, 1989, Route 1, Bessemer City. He recalled the small room on the south side of the building.

8 Ohio Synod Minutes 1895, 1896. Jacob Brown may have been a member of Ebenezer. Churchbook I. I examined a manuscript copy of the 1895 Concordia English District Minutes which was held by Raymond L. Pasour of 1741 Belmar Dr., Gastonia, N. C.

9 Interview with Fred Rash by the author on July 5, 1989, Route 4, Lincolnton, N. C.

10 "Congregation of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Hardin, Dedicates Building, After Payment of all Indebtedness", Footprints in Time, (The Gaston-Lincoln Genealogical Society, Fall Year 3 1898-90), p. 126.

11 Churchbook I. Ohio Synod Minutes 1897, and Golladay, "History of Concordia District", p. 50.

12 Churchbook I. Ohio Synod Minutes 1898.

13 Churchbook I. Ohio Synod Minutes 1899. Lincoln County Deed Book 69 page 480 and Book 83 page 405-406, Register of Deeds, Lincoln County Court-house, Lincolnton, N. C.

14 Churchbook I. Kiser, "Bethel". Ohio Synod Minutes 1901.

15 Ohio Synod Minutes 1904, 1906. Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, (New Market, Va.: Henkel & Co), 1901, 1908, held in private hands by Sarah Watts of Route 1, Bessemer City, N. C.

16 Churchbook I. Deppen, Counting Kindred, p. 301. Ohio Synod Minutes 1902, 1904, 1905. Paper held in private hands by Mrs. Wade Carpenter Sr. of Route 6, Lincolnton, N. C. The document was faded so badly the exact amount of money could not be read.

17 Ohio Synod Minutes 1906, 1907, 1908. Churchbook I.

18 Ohio Synod Minutes 1909, 1910. Churchbook I.

19 Tennessee Synod Minutes 1910, p. 13 and Tennessee Synod Minutes 1911, pp. 12-12, 63, held by Sarah Watts.

20 Kiser, "Bethel". Ohio Synod Minutes 1911, 1912.

21 Tennessee Synod Minutes 1912, pp. 4, 8-9, held by Sarah Watts. James Pasour Interview. St. Peters was located in front of Antioch and was made up of primarily former Antioch members. It had been established because of a split while Rev. Westenbarger was minister at Antioch. Interview of Ann Dellinger of Route 1, Crouse, on May 29, 1990 by the author.

22 Elizabeth "Lizzie" Carpenter Heishmann Interview. Deppen, Counting Kindred, p. 301. Life Sketches, p. 36. Ed Harmon Interview. Interview of Ransom Kiser by the author on December 28, 1989, Route 1, Bessemer City. Ransom was 95 years old.

23 Tennessee Synod Minutes 1913, pp. 4, 6, 7-10, 66, 70. Churchbook I. In the Pastors section Rev. J. C. Dietz is listed as serving from 1910-1914. But in other sections his date of arrival is listed as 1912. Kiser, "Bethel" listed his service as 1912-1914. Ed Harmon Interview.

24 Tennessee Synod Minutes 1914. A private paper held by Mrs. Wade Carpenter Sr. of Rt. 6, Lincolnton, N. C. Churchbook I.

25 Tennessee Synod Minutes 1915, pp. 65, 73. Churchbook I.

26 Tennessee Synod Minutes 1916, pp. 4, 6, 8-9, 12, 66, 71. Churchbook I.

27 Interview of Epsie Rudisill Kiser by Diane Kiser Carpenter on May 22, 1989, Route 1, Crouse. Interview of Polly Carpenter Wylie. Ransom Kiser Interview. Churchbook I.

28 Ed Harmon Interview.

29 Churchbook I. Tennessee Synod Minutes 1919, pp. 4-5, 74, 100, 104. Ed Harmon Interview. Interview of Polly Carpenter Wylie and Peg Carpenter Kiser by Diane Carpenter Kiser on June 17, 1989.

30 Tennessee Synod Minutes 1920, pp. 5-6, 17, 72, 76-77. Auditing Committee Report June 30, 1920, found by the author in an old Bible at the church. Churchbook I.

31 Churchbook I.

32 Tennessee Synod Minutes 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1919, 1920. Minutes of the United Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the South 1900, held by Sarah Watts. Lecture of Dr. Raymond Bost at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Dallas, N. C. on October 15, 1989.

33 Globe Standard Record, 1924. Churchbook I.

34 Ransom Kiser Interview. Fred Rash Interview. Ed Harmon Interview. Churchbook I.

Chapter 6

CONTINUED CONGREGATIONAL GROWTH DURING THE DEPRESSION

For the next 15 years Bethel Church experienced remarkable pastoral leadership. Because of Rev. F. M. Speagle, Rev. J. J. Bickley, and Rev. H. P. Barringer Bethel continued to have increased growth in membership, services offered, and physical improvements. The excitement at Bethel contrasted with the economic hardships which were caused by the Great Depression. Under these circumstances our lay leadership worked to improve Bethel Church.

The year 1925 brought increasing support for Bethel. Rev. F. M. Speagle recorded six infant baptisms. A first was also accomplished. On August 9 Rev. Speagle recorded that 106 persons communed. This is the first record that over 100 persons ever communed at Bethel. It further supports the thesis that August 9 was Homecoming Sunday, as was suggested in the 1917 record. On this same date Rev. Speagle confirmed Eunice Kiser, Edith Payseur, Edo Froneberger, and Mrs. Hugh Carpenter. Financial records for 1925 indicate that Rev. R. M. Carpenter supplied the church in January and February. M. S. Pasour continued to serve as "Janitor". He also was paid for getting the wafers and "communion wine." L. L. Reynolds was paid \$31.28 "for Pastors moving exp[ense]." On June 30 \$12.50 was paid to the "sunday school room fund" for a previous loan. This notation indicates that a separate fund was set up to pay for expenses when the congregation built the Sunday School Rooms onto the church. Rev. J. M. Senter was paid \$7.50 for "expenses to homecoming". Rev. N. D. Yount was paid \$3.50 "for Mt. Holly mission", which suggests that the church people valued the missionary work even though their own church was experiencing some financial difficulty. On October 5 the church borrowed \$79.48 from Loy Carpenter. This amount was re-paid by the end of December 1925. At this same time members made a commitment to the "Orphan Home Building Fund". Individual members pledged \$97 to this worthy purpose. The year 1925 ended with a balance in the treasury of \$43.23.¹

During these years and earlier while Ethel Kiser Lingerfeldt and Pearl Kiser Plonk were growing up in Bethel Church, they recalled a relaxed church atmosphere.

They recalled riding to church in a buggy. After church they would talk for "hours", the men talking about "their farming". Since there was no well at the church, they would walk to "Van" Pasour's to get water. Pearl K. Plonk recalled a large cedar tree cut by her father. Placed on the back of a wagon, it was taken to church where it was decorated "with popcorn balls on strings" to serve as the Christmas tree. Pearl Plonk also recalled that every second Sunday families would bring lunches and eat on the grounds. They would eat in separate family groups with "no sharing". With such fellowship the congregation continued to grow.²

In 1926 there were six infant baptisms. On August 7 Rev. Speagle confirmed John Edward Carpenter, George Howard Carpenter, and Brady Howard Best. On December 11, 1926, the following church officers were "re-elected": president, Loy Carpenter; secretary, Anderson Kiser; treasurer, Martin L. Carpenter; elders, W. E. Kiser, D. H. Harmon, Luther Kiser. Financial records indicate that from January until July, 1926 receipts were \$410.33. Disbursements include paying M. S. Pasour as custodian, paying "synodical dues", and paying Rev. Speagle his salary. On September 29 the church borrowed \$90 from the bank. Disbursements for the rest of the year included re-paying the bank loan, for "wiring parsonage", to J. E. Carpenter for ice on August 8, to the Mt. Holly mission, to the Building Fund, and to the seminary. The year ended with a balance of \$53.70.³

In 1927 there were eight baptisms recorded. On December 8 Lawson Henry Kiser, the elderly father of so many Kiser members, was confirmed into the church. On December 25, 1927, officers were elected for one year: president, John E. Carpenter, secretary, Willard Best; treasurer, Martin L. Carpenter; elders, Loy Carpenter, D. C. Kiser, Loy Froneberger. Financial records for 1927 indicate that the church continued to pay its synod dues, pay to the Lutheran Seminary (a total of \$30 was recorded), pay to the Lowman's Home, pay M. S. Pasour the janitor, pay Rev. Speagle, and pay for wood, wine and wafers, envelopes, insurance, and \$3 to Ella Kiser for "Tuning Piano".⁴

In 1928 only two infants were baptized. It was on September 15 of that year that Rev. Speagle's resignation went into effect. Ed Harmon recalled that Rev. Speagle was "sort of chunky" and was "short and heavy". Ransom Kiser said he thought a lot of Rev. Speagle. Sometime that same year Rev. J. J. Bickley began his service. During 1929 Rev. Bickley recorded three infant baptisms. On May 12 he listed 85 communicants. On August 11 Rev. Bickley confirmed a large class: Fred Brown Kiser, Clyde Columbus Kiser, Clarence William Kiser, Emma

Pauline Kiser, Blanch Louise Kiser, Margaret Dulcena Elizabeth Carpenter, Thelma Jane Carolina Carpenter, Mary Sue Best, Russell Daniel Angell, and Mary Ethel Harmon. During 1929-30 the following canvassers were appointed: R. G. Kiser and E. S. Harmon; G. L. Carpenter and S. O. Kiser; Willard Best and Sylvannus Carpenter; J. E. Carpenter and Christy Kiser; Theo. Carpenter and W. E. Kiser; D. C. Kiser and M. L. Carpenter. On November 27, 1930, the following were elected as members of the church council: chairman, J. E. Carpenter; treasurer, L. A. Kiser; secretary, Willard Bess; elders, Loy Carpenter, W. E. Kiser, D. C. Kiser. In addition the following persons assumed other important duties in the church: Berley Kiser, Sunday School Superintendent; Dock Carpenter, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent; Gus Kiser, Conference Delegate; Spargo Carpenter, Alternate Conference Delegate; Ella Kiser, Sunday School Secretary and Benevolence Treasurer; M. S. Pasour, Sunday School Treasurer. On July 12, 1931, Rev. Bickley listed the following who were confirmed at Bethel: Oscar Claude Carpenter, Ralph Augustus Kiser, and Richard Everette Carpenter (They were listed in his papers but not in the Churchbook.) Ed Harmon fondly remembered Rev. Bickley because 60 years ago he married Ed Harmon to Mary Carpenter. Ransom Kiser recalled Bickley as a "good preacher".⁵

During the pastorate of Rev. J. J. Bickley no pastoral acts appear in the Churchbook. In March 1932 Rev. Bickley resigned from the parish. On June 1, 1932, Rev. H. P. Barringer became pastor at Bethel Church. He was to begin a long and distinguished service to our congregation. Members recall Rev. Barringer with fond memories. Ed Harmon recalled that he liked to hunt and fish. He recalled that Barringer liked to raise popcorn and would sell the excess in town. Ransom Kiser recalled Barringer as being "as good a fellow as you met." He often went fishing with him. Once they, with a group of others, fished at the Outer Banks. Ransom thought so highly of him that he named a son, Hugh Barringer Kiser, after him. Claude Carpenter recalled that when Rev. Barringer came the church started really growing and started doing extra things.⁶

During 1932 Bethel saw three burials. Rev. Barringer had to perform at a very sad occasion as one of his first acts as pastor. On August 13, 1932, "Tennessee" John F. Carpenter was buried "on Home-Coming Sunday". The members mourned the death of the builder of Bethel. His leadership in the Church Council, as president of the church, and as overseer of the building of Bethel in 1893 was remembered by family and friends. Polly Carpenter Wylie recalled that "Tennessee" John had attended church regularly in a wheelchair for eleven years. He was paralyzed and his son, John E. Carpenter, would take him out of his

wheelchair and put him in the front pew. Members missed not seeing him on his front pew. On August 14 Rev. Barringer confirmed Keith Carpenter, Rachel Carpenter, Violet Carpenter, and Irene Kiser. On December 11, 1932, church officers were elected: president, John Carpenter; secretary, Willard Best; treasurer, Anderson Kiser; elders, Loy Carpenter, Spargo Carpenter, Miles Carpenter. On that same Sunday Lockie Carpenter transferred her membership from Landers Chapel Methodist Church. She would in future years teach many Sunday School classes at Bethel.⁷ With strong lay leadership Rev. Barringer was to continue his ministry.

During 1933 Rev. Barringer performed five infant baptisms and three burials. During this year a new constitution was adopted at Bethel. It was written in the Churchbook. On June 11 Rev. Barringer confirmed Mabel Kiser, Hazel Kiser, and Wade Carpenter. On July 7, 1933, the Church Council requested that one of the congregation's three "sons" would be asked to preach homecoming--Rev. L. J. S. Carpenter, Rev. J. M. Senter, Rev. R. M. Carpenter. If neither could preach, Rev. Barringer would be asked to preach. Bible School was set for the second week in August. On October 10 the Church Council met. A suggestion was made to clean the church windows and "fix the building." The Canvassing Committee was appointed: W. E. Kiser, Miles Carpenter, Loy Carpenter, Lew Carpenter, D. C. Kiser, Howard Carpenter, Spargo Carpenter, A. M. Kiser, Sam Kiser, Ransom Kiser. The Council nominated six persons for next year's Council, and the congregation was to nominate one for each Council seat. Terms were staggered--one year, two year, three year. The budget was recommended to the congregation: Pastor Salary, \$350; Benevolence, \$348; Insurance on church, \$10; Sexton, \$20. The Sunday School organization was set up: Superintendent, Miles Carpenter; Assistant Superintendent, Loy Carpenter; Secretary and Treasurer, Mrs. D. C. Kiser; Teachers Adult, Inez Kiser with assistant Jessie Huss and Loy Carpenter; Senior Department, Miles Carpenter with assistant Thelma Carpenter; Intermediate Department, Mrs. Ethel Lingerfeldt and Mrs. Loy Carpenter; Junior Department, Mrs. Howard Carpenter and Mrs. W. E. Kiser; Primary Department, Mrs. J. A. Kiser and Claudia Pasour. The Council noted that "pay up Sunday will be the 2nd Sunday in December." Pay up Sunday apparently dealt with pledges. On December 10, 1933, the congregation elected the following Church Council: Loy Carpenter, Spargo Carpenter, Miles A. Carpenter, Lewis Carpenter, John Hager, A. M. Kiser. The congregation also elected John Hager and A. M. Kiser as delegates to the 1934 Synod Conference.⁸ With these officers the church began a new year.

On January 15, 1934, Church Council met. At this organizational meeting some changes were made in Sunday School teachers and some additional committee appointments were made. In addition Loy Carpenter was elected chairman of the Council. On April 9 the Council met. It elected D. C. Kiser Assistant Secretary of the congregation. It also planned a "Sunday School picnic to Kings Mt. Battlepark" for the last Sunday in July. On May 13 Rev. Barringer confirmed Preston Lohr Kiser, Jacob Avery Kiser, Mildred Ethel Carpenter, and Ina Edith Carpenter. During the year Rev. Barringer performed three infant baptisms and one burial. On January 13, 1935, the congregation elected the Church Council: Loy Carpenter (who was again elected chairman), Lewis Carpenter, Spargo Carpenter, Gus Kiser, Miles Carpenter, John Hager. In addition Doc Kiser remained as secretary and Anderson Kiser remained as treasurer.⁹

While there had been discussion of improving the church 1933, it was to become a reality in 1935. During the spring the church was covered with tin shingles. During March members made contributions of \$181.25 to cover the cost of the shingles. The Building Committee acted as overseer of the project. They were D. C. Kiser, chairman, Loy Carpenter, Christy Kiser, Anderson Kiser. On April 23 the Council continued the improvements when it "decided to varnish the benches." Two of these old benches sit (1990) in the old Sunday School room behind the children's choir on the right side of the church. The Council also set up Bible School to begin July 22. During the 1930's the old pedal organ was replaced with a piano. It is believed that the piano behind the adult choir is the one purchased at this time. The inside to the church was recalled thusly by Claude Carpenter. He recalled a tongue-in groove ceiling of wood boards. The windows were still plain, probably original from 1893. The flooring was made up of wide boards. The old wood stove had been replaced with a stove of similar description which burned coal. Claude Carpenter recalled gas lamps were used, and while Rev. Barringer was pastor the church met at night on occasion.¹⁰

On October 7 Council met and appointed a committee "to put out shrubbery": Mrs. Bonnie Kiser, Mrs. Lucy Bright Carpenter, Mrs. Zoe Kiser, Mrs. Ocie Kiser, Mr. Loy Carpenter, and Mr. Will Kiser. On December 5 Church Council held its last meeting of the year. It organized Sunday School as follows: Superintendent, Loy Carpenter; Assistant, John Hager and Fred Kiser; Teachers and assistants-- Adult, Mrs. Inez Dellinger, Fred Kiser, Mrs. Hence Harmon; Senior, Mrs. Ethel Lingerfeldt, Blanche Kiser; Intermediate, Eunice Kiser, Thelma Carpenter; Junior, Margaret Carpenter, Claudia Payseur; Primary, Mrs. Howard Carpenter, Mrs. J. A.

Kiser. The congregation elected Christy Kiser and Lawrence Payseur to serve on the Council. It would appear that the proper rotation of Council members was established. During the busy year of 1935 there had been five infant baptisms and one burial. The year also saw two special donations: \$1.45 to Foreign Missions and \$2.26 to the Lowman's Home. On July 28 Rev. Barringer confirmed Virginia Carpenter, Frances Carpenter, and Loy Carpenter Jr. The congregation mourned the loss of another leader in the church, John E. Carpenter. Rev. Barringer recorded communicants four times: January 13 - 76; April 14 - 86; August 11 - 118; October 13 - 72.¹¹ The numbers indicate a vibrant and growing congregation.

During 1936 Rev. Barringer performed five infant baptisms and preached two funerals. He recorded 74 communicants on January 12, 85 on April 12, 98 on August 9, and 74 on October 11. The Church Council which met on April 12 elected John Hager to go to the synod session and Lawrence Payseur as alternate. On October 8 Council appointed the following Canvassing Committee: D. C. Kiser and Paul Carpenter; W. E. Kiser and John Carpenter Jr.; A. M. Kiser and Loy Carpenter; John Hager and Spargo Carpenter; Sam Kiser and Ransom Kiser. During this period Bethel looked after those who needed assistance. On October 10 Bethel raised \$74.05 to match \$30.50 raised by St. Marks Lutheran. The money was to be used to purchase a mule for Mrs. J. A. Kiser. On December 14 the Council recommended the following Sunday School officers: Superintendent, Loy Carpenter; Assistant, John Hager and Fred Kiser; Treasurer, D. C. Kiser; Secretary, Mrs. D. C. Kiser; Teachers Adult, Mrs. Forest Dellinger, Assistants Jessie Huss, John Hager; Senior, Mrs. Ethel Lingerfeldt, Assistant Blanche and Mabel Kiser; Intermediate, Eunice Kiser, Assistant, Mrs. John Hager; Junior, Mrs. Thelma Loftin, Assistant, Irene Kiser; Primary, Hazel Kiser, Assistant, Pauline Kiser. It recommended the 1937 budget to be \$572 with \$540 subscribed. It appointed John Hager "to raise balance of benevolence" on the fourth Sunday in December. At the congregational meeting the following Council members were elected: Anderson Kiser, Treasurer; D. C. Kiser,¹² Secretary; Elders, Spargo Carpenter, Gus Kiser, John Hager.

During 1937 Rev. Barringer baptized two infants. He buried four persons including two faithful members, Frank Payseur and M. L. Kiser. On January 10 he recorded 53 communicants; on April 11, 75; on August 8, 106; and on October 10, 71. On July 25 he confirmed Louise Kiser, Evelyn Kiser, Fred Kiser, and Robert Smart. The numbers indicate that Bethel remained a thriving congregation. On October 16 the Church Council met and appointed the same Can-

vassing Committee as the previous year. Council recommended the following 1938 budget: benevolence, \$168; incidentals, \$25; sexton, \$26; pastor's salary, \$360; which totalled \$579. On December 6 the Council recommended Sunday School officers. They remained the same as the previous year except Mrs. J. A. Kiser replaced John Hager as assistant Adult teacher; Mrs. Forrest Allen became assistant Senior teacher; Junior teacher and assistant were reversed. The congregation elected as elders Loy Carpenter and Spargo Carpenter.¹³

On January 23, 1938, John and Mamie Mitchem transferred to Bethel from Grace Lutheran in Bessemer City. On the same day Church Council met. It decided to purchase candles for the altar "out [of] Sunday School treasure. It will be .93 at present." Council decided to raise the remainder of its portion of the parsonage being built in Crouse. The total raised for the parsonage included \$508.57. In addition Bethel donated 6000 feet of lumber for the parsonage worth \$90. Members worked on it for 58½ days, and four team of horses worked one day. This parsonage replaced the earlier one which was secured in 1912 or 1913. Council also elected Spargo Carpenter as delegate to synod and Ella Kiser as alternate. On April 12 on Palm Sunday the altar cross and candles, which were given by the Women's Missionary Society, were dedicated to Rev. J. M. Senter, Rev. L. J. S. Carpenter, Rev. R. M. Carpenter, Mrs. John Kiser, Mrs. Van Paysour, and Mrs. Elmire Hagar. The candelabras were also dedicated to Paul and Larry Barringer and given by Rev. and Mrs. H. P. Barringer. On June 28 a well was completed for the church. There had been no water supply for the church until this time. Walter Carpenter and Ella Kiser donated the well in memory of their parents Rev. and Mrs. M. L. Carpenter, Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Kiser and their aunt and uncle Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Carpenter. On July 24 Rev. Barringer confirmed Gladys Kiser and Merle Kiser. On November 28 the Church Council met. It proposed the following 1939 budget: benevolence, \$168; sextant, \$26; coal, \$10; envelopes, \$10; incidentals, \$10; insurance for the church, \$12.50; pastor's salary, \$350. The total was \$586.50. Sunday School officers remained the same with the exception of Mable Kiser as assistant Senior teacher; Mrs. Howard Carpenter as assistant Intermediate teacher; Frances Carpenter as assistant Junior teacher. At the congregational meeting the following were elected to the Church Council: D. C. Kiser, secretary; Anderson Kiser, treasurer; John Carpenter Jr. and Howard Carpenter, elders. During the year Rev. Barringer had performed five infant baptisms, three marriages, and two burials, one of which was M. Alexander Carpenter. He recorded 66 communicants on January 9; 73 on April 10; 121 on August 14; 72 on October 9.¹⁴

In 1939 Rev. Barringer began his seventh year as minister of Bethel Church. During this year Rev. Barringer would baptise five infants. He performed a marriage between two of Bethel's members: Preston Kiser and Eunice Kiser. The congregation continued to appear healthy. On January 8 he recorded 70 communicants; on April 9, 88; on August 13 (Homecoming), 113; and on October 8, 72. On July 23 Rev. Barringer confirmed Alvin Carpenter and John Earnie Kiser. For the year the Church Council organized itself thusly: Chairman, Loy Carpenter; elders included John Hager, John Carpenter, Spargo Carpenter, A. M. Kiser, and Howard Carpenter. The pianist was Mrs. Forest Dellinger. The pianist for the Sunday School was Eunice Kiser. Those in charge of the Children's Department were Mrs. Fred Kiser and Mrs. Wilson Cauble. The following committees for the church were appointed: Light Committee, L. A. Kiser chairman, Loy Carpenter, John Hager; Building Committee, Loy Carpenter chairman, L. A. Kiser, W. E. Kiser; Cemetery Committee, John Carpenter chairman, John Mitchem, A. M. Kiser.¹⁵ With such leadership the congregation continued to face progress to their little rural church.

On July 23, 1939, a congregational meeting was held to decide whether the church "wanted electric lights put in the church." After debate the vote was taken: 45 for lights, 6 against. The church hoped "to get lights put in, in the near future." On September 10 the Church Council proposed the 1940 budget: benevolence, \$168; sextant, \$26; incidentals, \$10; pastor's salary, \$350; envelopes, \$6; insurance on church, \$12.50. The benevolence amount, which was sent to Synod, was reduced from \$210 to \$168 by motion, a second, and a vote. On November 13 the Church Council selected Sunday School officers which were the same as the previous year with the exception that assistant Junior teacher was Francis Carpenter. On December 10 the congregation elected John Hager and A. M. Kiser as councilmen at the congregational meeting. They also elected Ralph Kiser to serve as delegate to Synod and John Mitchem as alternate.¹⁶ The last full year of service for Rev. Barringer had been one of excitement.

1 Churchbook I. The Globe Standard Record, 1925.

2 Interview of Ethel Kiser Lingerfeldt and Pearl Kiser Plonk by Hub Sellers on June 20, 1989 at Rest Home in Lincolnton, N. C.

3 Churchbook I. The Globe Standard Record, 1926.

4 Churchbook I. The Globe Standard Record, 1927.

5 "The Pastoral Acts of Rev. J. J. Bickley", original sent to Bethel Church and a copy on file at the Lutheran Archives in Salisbury. No pastoral acts appear in the Churchbook during Bickley's stay. Ed Harmon Interview. Ransom Kiser Interview.

6 Churchbook I. Ed Harmon Interview. Ransom Kiser Interview. Claude Carpenter Interview.

7 Polly Carpenter Wylie Interview. Churchbook I.

8 Churchbook I. "Council Meetings" appear in the Record of Interesting and Important Events section. Rev. Barringer with the able assistance of D. C. Kiser did an exceptional job of seeing that events were properly recorded.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid. Ed Harmon Interview. Claude Carpenter Interview.

11 Churchbook I.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

Chapter 7

WORLD WAR II AND ITS AFTERMATH

As the beloved Rev. H. P. Barringer left the pastorate, outside forces would affect life at Bethel. World War II was on the horizon. The trauma of the war and the changes its aftermath brought would forever change Bethel congregation. In the midst of the war the congregation embarked upon a mammoth remodeling campaign for the inside of the church. During the next twenty years Bethel would build a Parish House, buy a church organ, and experience growth in its membership. The parish would also change. The four-church parish of 1940 would become a two-church parish in 1961. For 18 years of the 21-year period Rev. L. S. Miller gave consistent leadership to the people of Bethel. For the members of Bethel the next period in their history would be both disruptive and rewarding.

On January 14, 1940, A. M. Kiser and John Hager were installed as church elders. On March 1 Rev. H. P. Barringer ended his long and fruitful service at Bethel. On the same date Rev. Walter N. Yount began as pastor. During 1940 there were four infant baptisms. On January 14 there were 37 communicants; on April 14, 113; on August 11, 120; and on October 13, 75. Our congregation was in very good condition as far as attendance was concerned. On July 20 the Women's Missionary Society gave a rug for the choir. On July 28 Rev. Yount confirmed Daniel Mitchem, J. B. Kiser, Fern Mitchem, Arminta Kiser, W. L. Carpenter, and Mrs. Clarence Kiser, who transferred from Long Creek Presbyterian. On August 11 Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Dellinger gave a candle lighter to the church. On October 14 the Church Council met and nominated the church officers. The every member canvass was to begin on the fourth Sunday in October. The congregational meeting was held on the second Sunday in December. The congregation elected an entire slate of church officers: secretary, D. C. Kiser; treasurer, Anderson Kiser; elders, Loy Carpenter, Spargo Carpenter, Wilson Cauble, Clarence Kiser, and Edward Harmon. The congregation also agreed upon the organization of the Sunday School and its teachers. They were: Sunday School Superin-

tendent, Loy Carpenter; Assistant, John Hager, Fred Kiser; Secretary and Treasurer, Mrs. D. C. Kiser; Teachers - Adult, Robert Lingerfeldt, Mrs. Inez Dellinger; Senior, Mrs. Ethel Lingerfeldt, Ralph Kiser; Intermediate, Mrs. Eunice Kiser, Mrs. Howard Carpenter; Junior, Francis Carpenter, Mrs. J. A. Kiser; Primary, Mrs. George Neal, Mrs. Fred Kiser; Beginners, Mrs. Clarence Kiser, Pauline Kiser. On January 23, 1941, Rev. Yount installed the above listed church and Sunday School officers.¹

During the year 1941 Rev. Yount baptized five infants. He performed two marriages and one burial. He listed 64 communicants on January 12; 79 on April 13; 115 on August 10; and 55 on October 12. On October 7 the Church Council met. The proposed 1942 budget included \$420, pastor's salary; \$168, benevolence; \$15, insurance on the church; \$5, insurance on the parsonage; \$26.50, sexton; \$5, coal; \$10.50, miscellaneous; which made a total of \$650.00. Probably because of events in Japan and Germany, the congregational meeting was not held as usual in 1941. Instead on January 19, 1942, Church Council met at Anderson Kiser's home. It nominated three persons for Church Council. It also nominated Sunday School officers and teachers which differed from the previous year in only the following ways: Ralph Kiser became superintendent; Junior teacher was Mrs. John Carpenter who replaced Francis Carpenter; Beginners teacher Mrs. John Mitchem replaced Mrs. Clarence Kiser. On March 8 Rev. Yount installed the new Church Council members - Edward Harmon, John E. Carpenter, Jr., and Howard Carpenter. The church records during this period do not address the major decisions which the church had made. At some time during this period the congregation embarked upon a major remodeling project. It is probable that the remodeling effort had gotten underway before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. At any rate under adverse circumstances Bethel Church set out to improve the church, its inside appearance, and its furnishings.²

The records which have survived suggest that the project was both expensive and extensive. W. R. Fite was hired to do at least some of the work. The pews were all replaced with brand new pews. Ed Harmon recalled that the old pews were donated to one of the local Negro churches - Pisgah or Beaverdam. The plain windows were replaced with stained glass windows. The two rods which ran overhead were covered with wood beams. The ceiling was replaced, and the floor was also replaced. Rods were placed in the steeple, probably because cracks were appearing in the bricks. The church was painted by a Mr. Cornwell or a company named Cornwell. The inside walls were re-plastered and the wainscoating was replaced with different boards being placed underneath the wainscoating. In

addition to the pews individuals donated new furnishings including the pulpit, lecturn, altar, chancel choir, baptismal stand, Communion set, and altar cloths. The improvements were needed and made the church appear much more attractive. What was ironic was that many of the young men, faithful members, were not present to witness the improvements.³

These young men were in the armed services. Some were already involved in combat, and some were in training. They were unaware that Bethel was busy remodeling their church. The donations totalled \$3767.99. The expenditures totalled \$3595.20. Some special donations were not included in these totals. It is assumed that the work on the church was done during the spring and summer of 1942. During July 1942 the chancel furniture was placed in the church. On the second Sunday in August, Homecoming Sunday, Rev. Walter N. Yount dedicated the new chancel furniture. He was assisted by Rev. R. M. "Burt" Carpenter. In addition other new items were dedicated. The pulpit and lecturn were given by Walter Carpenter in memory of his parents, Rev. M. L. Carpenter D.D. and M. Caroline Carpenter. The altar was given in memory of Barbara D. Senter and in honor of Rev. J. M. Senter D.D. by their children. The reredos and chancel choirs were given in memory of Henry and Mary Jane Kiser by their children. The altar edition of The Communion Service and baptismal stand was given in honor of H. Sidney Kiser by their children. The green altar cloths were given by Ralph Kiser. A list of members who donated to purchase the pews was placed in the narthex of the church.⁴ It is assumed that all work had been completed by this time. The congregation celebrated their improved house of worship.

On September 15, 1942, Rev. Walter N. Yount resigned. Ed Harmon remembered him as possibly the best preacher Bethel had. He liked the way Rev. Yount said what needed to be said, simply and direct. Forrest Dellinger told the story of how he and Robert "Bob" Lingerfeldt joined our church. On Rev. Yount's last Sunday Bob came up to Forrest asking when he planned to join the church. Forrest responded that he had been thinking about it. Bob responded that "Well this would be a good time to join for this is Pastor Yount's last Sunday." Sitting on the back pew Bob made a deal with Forrest: "If you join today, I will also. And the preacher will have to accept us as we are, without confirmation." Forrest agreed and dashed out to the back of the church since the service was about to begin. He said, "Preacher, Robert Lingerfeldt and I wish to join Bethel today, just as we are without confirmation." Pastor Yount stunned, agreed reluctantly. As the service began Forrest re-joined Bob on the back pew. After the sermon Rev. Yount announced Bethel had two new mem-

bers - Robert Lingerfeldt and Forrest Dellinger. Everyone turned and looked back at them. Inez Dellinger "almost fainted and [Forrest] thought she might fall off the piano stool." The Churchbook has the unusual notation for "Sept. /42 Robert Lingerfeldt, Forrest Dellinger by letter." On October 1, 1942, Rev. Roy L. Fisher became pastor. Records during World War II were very incomplete. A notation in the Churchbook stated that the same Sunday School officers served from 1942 until 1947. During 1942 no baptisms were listed in the Churchbook. One marriage occurred and five burials were listed. On July 26 Rev. Yount confirmed Nancy Mae Kiser, Herman Kiser, Jeanette Carpenter, Mary Sue Kiser, and Betty Jean Kiser. Communicants for the year were listed thusly: January 11, 37; April 12, 66; August 9, 98; November 18, 85. Obviously the church missed its young men who were at war.⁵.

During 1943 the members of Bethel enjoyed their nicely remodeled church, but they also missed their young men. Only one adult baptism and two infant baptisms were recorded. Two burials were listed. On July 25 Rev. Fisher confirmed Bane Harmon, Clyde Mitchem, and Sammy Kiser. Communicants were similar to the year before: 72 on January 10; 59 on April 11; 135 on August 8; 74 on November 14. Because of the war church officers had to be added and installed at abnormal times. W. E. Kiser had been installed on April 12, 1942 to fill an unexpired term. The following were added on December 13, 1942: D. C. Kiser, Anderson Kiser, R. G. Kiser, A. M. Kiser, John Hager. On September 1, 1943, Rev. Roy Fisher resigned to serve as a chaplain in the army.⁶ He would be missed but the members wished him well since he could possibly minister to Bethel's sons.

On October 1, 1943, Rev. L. S. Miller became pastor of Bethel Church. He was to begin a long ministry of 18 years. On February 13, 1944, Rev. Miller installed three elders: W. E. Kiser, Loy Carpenter, Robert Lingerfelt. He baptized two infants during the year. One burial was listed. Communicants were listed as follows: 54 on February 13; 74 on April 19; 104 on August 13; 63 on October 8. While most focused on the successful war effort during 1945, Rev. Miller continued to serve the needs of the people. On January 28 he installed the following to the Church Council: Howard Carpenter, Edward Harmon, John E. Carpenter Jr., D. C. Kiser as Secretary, and Anderson Kiser as Treasurer. He baptized six infants during 1945. He recorded three burials which included Sidney Kiser and P. Sylvannus Carpenter, faithful older members. Communicants for 1945 which were listed included 61 on January 14; 70 on April 18; 114 on August 12; 61 on October 14.⁷ As 1945 closed, wives and parents anticipi-

pated the return of their loved ones. They hoped for a return to a normal life.

On January 11, 1946, Rev. Miller installed three Church Council members. They were Ransom Kiser, A. M. Kiser, and John Hager. During the year there were no baptisms and no marriages. There were two burials. One was the August funeral of Rev. Jonas M. Senter. His service to our church was once again recalled by the members. Communicants for 1946 included 54 on January 13; 80 on April 14; 158 on August 11; and 81 on October 13. The figure for the August Homecoming was the largest number ever before recorded. During July Rev. Miller confirmed Barbara Fay Carpenter, John Burke Carpenter, Hal Lynch Carpenter, Jack Kenneth Carpenter, and Margaret Mitchem. On October 26 Rev. Miller dedicated a number of new items to be included within the newly remodeled church. An electric candelabra was donated by John Hager in honor of his wife Ulia Hager and by William E. Kiser in honor of his wife Ocie Kiser. The "Gethsemane Window", which had been placed over the altar, was given "in loving memory" of John Franklin Carpenter and wife Dulcenia Alexander Carpenter by Rev. L. J. Sidney Carpenter and wife Annie Lee, Mrs. Ella Carpenter and husband Lafayette Carpenter, and Mrs. Venia Setzer and husband C. A. Setzer. It was a beautiful addition to the church. The altar vases were donated by Mrs. Carl H. Plonk and Mrs. R. D. Lingerfeldt in memory of their father H. Sidney Kiser and in honor of their mother Mrs. Lillie Kiser.⁸ The year closed with the largest crowd ever at a service, new additions to the church, and the potential for future church growth.

On January 12, 1947, Rev. Miller installed five Church Council members: D. C. Kiser, Secretary; Anderson Kiser, Treasurer; Loy Carpenter Sr., Robert Lingerfeldt, Forrest Allen Jr., Elders. For 1947 Rev. Miller baptized three infants. He recorded two marriages. The Communicants for the year were listed as follows: 84 on January 12; 68 on April 13; 156 on August 10; 84 on October 12. On July 13 Rev. Miller confirmed Margaret Kathrine Carpenter, Hugh Franklin Kiser, and Author Carolyn Kiser. Also apparently during 1947 Mr. and Mrs. Lester Clark transferred from Hephzibah Presbyterian Chruch to Bethel. During the year the Church Council met and established Sunday School officers and teachers. No changes had occurred since the start of the war. The Sunday School organization included Superintendent, Ralph Kiser; Assistant Superintendent, Loy Carpenter and John Hager; Secretary and Treasurer, Mrs. D. C. Kiser; Teachers Adult, Forrest Allen Jr., assistants Mrs. Forrest Dellinger and R. D. Lingerfeldt; Senior, Ralph Kiser, assistant Mrs. Mabel Neal; Intermediate, Mrs. John E. Carpenter, assistant Mrs. Preston Kiser; Junior, Mrs. John Mitchem, assistant

Miss Pauline Kiser; Primary, Mrs. Howard Carpenter, assistant Mrs. Nancy Kiser.
These same persons would also serve for 1948.⁹

On January 14, 1948, Rev. Miller installed the re-elected Church Council members - Ransom Kiser, A. M. Kiser, and John Hager. Rev. Miller baptized five infants. World War II was beginning to have its effect upon the Baby Boom. Bethel mourned six funerals during the year. The deceased included some of the oldest and most faithful members: Mrs. M. Alexander Carpenter, Mrs. M. Sylvannus Pasour, Mrs. W. E. "Ocie" Kiser, and M. Sylvannus Pasour. The home of Sylvannus and Mary Jane Pasour now stood empty. Once it held Bethel's services while the church was being built in the 1890's. They would be missed. Ransom Kiser remembered "Van" Pasour fondly. He recalled him as a "little fellow", who walked to church. He recalled that he was "there every Sunday." Rev. Miller recorded communicants for 1948 as follows: 76 on January 11; 72 on April 11; 99 on August 18; 75 on October 10.¹⁰

On January 9, 1949, Rev. Miller installed new Church Council members. The Council elected three persons - John E. Carpenter Jr., Ralph Kiser, and Ed Harmon. The congregation also elected three persons - Anderson Kiser, Miller Pay-sour, and Forrest Dellinger. All six were to serve for three years. D. C. Kiser was re-elected secretary. Anderson Kiser resigned as treasurer, and Howard Carpenter was elected the church treasurer. Anderson Kiser had served the church for 18 years as the treasurer. During 1949 Rev. Miller baptized two infants. He also recorded three burials. Rev. Miller recorded communicants for the year: 73 on January 9; 91 on April 10; 113 on August 14; and 81 on October 9.¹¹

During the year 1950 Rev. Miller only baptized one infant. He recorded six burials during the year. One was Frank Payseur, the adopted son of Emanuel Carpenter. He recorded the following communicants: 72 on January 8; 77 on April 16; 153 on August 13; 72 on November 12. During December 1950 two Council members were elected. They were Lester Clark and Clarence Kiser. Sometime between 1943 and 1952 Bethphage left the parish to become self-supporting.¹² Their departure left Bethel, St. Pauls, and St. Marks in the pastorate.

On January 11, 1951, Rev. Miller installed the following Church Council members: secretary, D. C. Kiser; treasurer, Howard Carpenter; elders, Ransom Kiser, John Hager, A. M. Kiser. Rev. Miller recorded two baptisms, of which one was the author. He recorded two burials. One was Rev. L. J. Sidney Carpenter. While he had served for many years away from Bethel as a Lutheran minister, he was remembered and mourned by all. Rev. Miller recorded the following communicants: 80 on January 14; 92 on April 8; 149 on August 12; 82 on October 13. On

December 23, 1951, Rev. Miller installed additional Church Council members: John E. Carpenter, Ralph Kiser, Forrest Dellinger, Paul Best, Preston Kiser, and Paul Moretz. In addition at the same time the Churchbook records that two "Life Members" were also installed. They were L. Anderson Kiser and Loy Carpenter St.¹³.

The church was growing and one of the greatest areas of growth was in the Sunday School. In November 1950 Mrs. Mamie Mitchem and Mrs. Inez Dellinger, as members of the Women of the Church Group 2, took the lead in suggesting that the church needed more room. The decision was made and work began. The first special offering for the Parish House was taken Christmas 1950. During the summer of 1951 the Parish House, which stands behind the church, was constructed by Dan Mitchem. He was a contractor and also a member of Bethel. Pledges were taken from the church membership to cover the cost. The pledges from members which were recorded totalled \$1738.50. The actual cost of the Parish House was "approximately \$6000." The Building Committee, which also raised the funds, was chaired by Forrest Allen Jr. The committee members were Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Allen Jr., Mr. and Mrs. John Carpenter, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Carpenter, Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Dellinger, and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Kiser. Once completed the plain frame structure was to serve as fellowship hall, kitchen, and for additional Sunday School rooms. In February, 1952 the Parish House was completed and Group 2 of the Women of the Church held the first meeting in it. Many members helped with the project by donating certain items and certain types of construction. On December 21, 1952, Rev. F. L. Conrad, President of the North Carolina Synod, dedicated the Parish House. After the "Sermon of Dedication" Rev. Conrad presented the key to the Parish House to Rev. Miller, and the congregation went to the Parish House for the remainder of the service. As part of the service Miss Barbara Harmon sang the solo "Bless This House."¹⁴ Construction of the Parish House was a major addition to the parish life at Bethel.

During 1952 Rev. Miller baptized two infants. He recorded one burial. He listed the following communicants: 84 on January 13; 120 on April 13; 144 on August 10; 85 on October 13. The numbers indicate the increased membership and attendance at Bethel. But changes were taking place. In the past our church was made up almost exclusively of farmers. During the post-World War II period many young men found jobs other than farming. They found textile jobs, jobs with governmental agencies, and other jobs in the local towns. Because of the advent of the automobile the rural community of Bethel found itself more mobile.¹⁵ These changes were to have a continual impact upon our future.

During 1953 Rev. Miller recorded one baptism. He recorded three burials. One was L. Anderson Kiser. As long-time treasurer and life member of the Church Council, he was greatly respected. He was sorely missed. On August 9 Rev. H. P. Barringer preached the Homecoming services at Bethel. Rev. Miller recorded the following communicants: 94 on January 11; 75 on April 12; 152 on August 9; 74 on October 11. During December new Church Council members were selected. They were John E. Carpenter Jr., Ralph Kiser, Lester Clark, and Clarence Kiser.¹⁶

During 1954 only one baptism was recorded in the churchbook. Rev. Miller recorded one marriage--Gladys Kiser to Frank Rhyne--and listed two burials. Rev. Miller recorded the following communicants: 92 on January 10; 86 on April 11; 165 on August 8; 78 on October 10. On December 19, 1954, the congregation elected the following church councilmen: Frank Kiser, Earl Payseur, Herman Kiser, Ed Harmon, D. C. Kiser as secretary and listed as life member, and Howard Carpenter as treasurer.¹⁷

During the year of 1955 Rev. L. S. Miller recorded the following communicants: 84 on March 20; 149 on August 14; 80 on October 16. He baptized six infants during the year and confirmed two members. On December 18, 1955, the following Church Council members were installed by Rev. Miller: John Hager, Ransom Kiser, and A. M. Kiser.¹⁸

During the year 1956 Rev. Miller continued to lead the congregation. He baptized three infants. He listed the following communicants: 85 on January 15; 79 on April 8; 161 on August 12; 86 on October 21. Rev. Miller recorded four marriages during the year. They were Sue Kiser to Herbert Sellers; Sue Jane Kiser to Bois Harmon; Marlene Best to Hugh Kiser; and two members, Frank Carpenter to Shirley Carpenter. Rev. Miller also recorded one burial. On July 15 he confirmed five members. On December 16 Rev. Miller installed John E. Carpenter, Lester Clark, Ralph Kiser, and Forrest Dellinger as Church Council members.¹⁹

Rev. Miller listed the following communicants for 1957: 82 on January 20; 90 on April 14; 163 on August 11; and 95 on October 20. Only one infant baptism was recorded for the year, and he listed one marriage. He listed five burials during the year. On December 8 the congregation elected the following Church Councilmen at the regular Congregational meeting: John Burke Carpenter, Wade Carpenter, Claude Carpenter, and Preston Kiser. During the whole year the receipts from the Sunday School totalled \$669.75. Of this amount \$494.51 was spent on such items as the light bill, flowers, Christmas treat, gift for Rev.

and Mrs. Miller, books, Children's Home, Lowman's Home, Lutheran World Action, Bible School literature, and Cook Publishing. Building Fund receipts totalled \$212.09. The year 1957 was a big year for increased membership. Rev. Miller confirmed two members. In addition a total of seven transfers were received into membership at Bethel.²⁰

The year 1958 brought consistent growth. Rev. Miller recorded the following communicants for the year: 81 on January 19; 83 on April 20; 153 on August 10; 85 on October 18. He confirmed two members and added two adults into membership by transfer and adult baptism. Rev. Miller recorded eight infant baptisms. He listed one marriage and two burials which included Ralph Kiser and Sam Kiser. Sammy Kiser was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Ralph Kiser on the Church Council. On December 21, 1958, Rev. Miller installed the following Church Council members: Howard Carpenter, A. M. Kiser, Spargo Carpenter, and John Hager. The total receipts for the Sunday School during the year was \$669.69. Of this amount \$605.72 was spent out of the account. The Building Fund brought in \$306.61²¹

During 1959 Rev. Miller recorded communicants thusly: 72 on January 18; 76 on April 19; 150 on August 9; 74 on October 15. He listed three infant baptisms and one burial, Mrs. M. L. Kiser. He confirmed one member and added two adults through transfer. On December 30 he installed Church Council members: John E. Carpenter, Lester Clark, Sammy Kiser, and Forrest Dellinger. The Sunday School collected \$588.76 during the year from its members. It spent \$469.49 on items such as the light bill, materials from David Cook, perfect attendance pins, flowers, repairs to the Parish House, coffee and cups for the "Fellowship dinner", Christmas treat, "Picnic Supplies Xmas dinner", and literature from Lutheran Publishing House. The Building Fund collected \$197.71. It was during the latter 1950's that the Women's Missionary Society decided Bethel needed a new organ. In order to help raise money for the organ, the Women sponsored chicken and dumpling suppers in the Parish House. When enough money was secured, the organ was bought and Mrs. Miller played it. The church sent Sue Sellers and Iris Carpenter to Charlotte to learn how to play the new organ.²² The new organ was an important addition to the religious life of Bethel.

During 1960 Rev. Miller baptized eight infants. He listed the following communicants: 65 on January 17; 87 on April 10; 165 on August 14; 75 on October 16. On February 28 Bethel Church received six adults into the church through transfers and adult baptisms. The Church Council was elected by the congregation at its annual meeting. They were John Burke Carpenter, Wade Carpenter,

Claude Carpenter, Preston Kiser, Earl Payseur who became Treasurer, and D. C. Kiser, who continued as Secretary. Doc C. Kiser served 28 years as secretary of Bethel. He continued his lengthy service until 1963.²³ The year 1960 would be the last full year that Bethel would receive the services of Rev. L. S. Miller.

As Rev. Miller considered retirement from the ministry, he continued to serve the Bethel-St. Pauls-St. Marks charge. It had been a challenging mission--bringing these rural congregations out of the aftermath of World War II into a new and changing world. The issue of "going self-supporting" presented itself. The impractical nature of a minister serving so many parishes and the growing financial capabilities of these smaller congregations caused them to consider calling their own pastor, constructing their own parsonage, and taking complete responsibility for their own parish life. As these congregations had grown in membership and financial resources, its members wanted their pastor to assume more responsibility for their congregation's life. St. Marks considered these factors, and when Rev. Miller announced his retirement St. Marks decided to break away from the parish and go self-supporting. Their move left only Bethel and St. Pauls together in the pastorate. On April 1, 1961, Rev. L. S. Miller resigned as pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church.²⁴

With the resignation of Rev. Miller an era ended for Bethel Church. The period had seen growth in the Sunday School, in church services, and the construction of the Parish House. The period of growth lay the foundation for future years. The 1960's would bring unparalleled growth and increased opportunities. But the '60's would also bring nationwide turmoil and social discontent. As the world changed around Bethel Church, its members began to look to the future with anticipation and with expectation.

1 Churchbook I.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. I found two typewritten papers which detailed the donations for the remodeling project and which detailed the expenditures. These papers were stuck inside the Churchbook. Ed Harmon Interview. Claude Carpenter Interview.

4 Churchbook I. Claude Carpenter Interview.

5 Churchbook I. Interview with Forrest Dellinger by Hub Sellers on June 22, 1989, Rt. 1, Crouse.

6 Churchbook I. Claude Carpenter Interview.

- 7 Churchbook I.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid. Ransom Kiser Interview.
- 11 Churchbook I.
- 12 Churchbook I. Interview of Sue Sellers by the author, June 17, 1990.
- 13 Churchbook I. Ed Harmon Interview. Historic Properties Proposals.
- 14 Bethel Lutheran Church Bulletin, December 21, 1952, located at Bethel Church. Ed Harmon Interview.
- 15 Churchbook I. Claude Carpenter Interview.
- 16 Churchbook I. Bethel Lutheran Church Bulletin, August 9, 1953, located at Bethel Church.
- 17 Churchbook I.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid. Sunday School Ledger found at Bethel Church.
- 21 Churchbook I. Sunday School Ledger found at Bethel Church.
- 22 Churchbook I. Sunday School Ledger found at Bethel Church. Sue Sellers Interview.
- 23 Churchbook I.
- 24 Claude Carpenter Interview. Churchbook I. Sue Sellers Interview.

Chapter 8

SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND A NEW PARSONAGE

After the resignation of Rev. L. S. Miller the combined pulpit committees of St. Pauls Crouse and Bethel began their search for a new minister. Certainly a two church parish would be more acceptable to a minister than the four, then three church parish of the past. The pulpit committees settled upon Rev. Roy L. Trexler. The churches officially called him to ministry, and on July 1, 1961, he became pastor of Bethel and St. Pauls. Rev. Trexler baptized four infants during the year. Four burials were recorded for the year. One was the death of Augustus M. "Gus" Kiser, who had served countless years on the Church Council and in other positions. The communicant records continued to reflect a strong membership: 82 on January 15; 109 on August 13; 94 on October 1. Three new members were transferred into the congregation during the year. On the last Sunday in October a joint Reformation Service was planned with St. Pauls. On September 24 the congregation voted to approve the purchase of additional property which joined the church cemetery. At the October 2 Church Council meeting it was reported that average attendance for September for church was 103. Rev. Trexler suggested that the church needed a new churchbook. Bethel had used the old churchbook which had been purchased by Rev. Benjamin Westenbarger in 1893. This suggestion was followed. It was purchased and he began using it in 1962. On December 6 the Council learned that the property adjoining the cemetery was not for sale. On December 10 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected the following new Church Councilmen: Bayne Harmon, Herman Kiser, Herbert Sellers, and Paul Carpenter. The annual treasurer's report stated that in 1961 \$3,986.84 was collected with \$3,361.26 in expenses. The December 1 balance was \$806.65. While considering the 1962 budget the congregation voted to cut the benevolence from \$1660 to \$850. The congregation approved the budget for 1962 after adding \$250 to the car expense allowance.¹ In his first year Rev. Trexler was getting accustomed to the Bethel congregation.

During 1962 Rev. Trexler baptized four infants. He recorded one marriage and one funeral. On January 8 the Church Council met. It elected John Burke Carpenter as Vice Chairman and Bayne Harmon as Secretary of the Council. At this time Pastor Trexler suggested that \$100 be added to last year's benevolence. The Council defeated this resolution. Previous to this time Communion was held only four times during the year. On January 22 the Council accepted Rev. Trexler's recommendation that Bethel increase the number of communion services. Seven were approved for 1962. At the same meeting a Board of Education was approved by Council: Herbert Sellers, Superintendent of Sunday School; John B. Carpenter, Vice Chairman; Lester Clark, Church Council; Frank Kiser and Loy Carpenter Jr., Laymen; Mrs. Bayne Harmon and Mrs. John Carpenter, Church Women. During the year Rev. Trexler listed the following communicants: 76 on January 7; 80 on March 4; 77 on April 8; 61 on April 18; 69 on June 10; 77 on October 7; 76 on December 2. This year also marked the first year that Communion was not recorded on Homecoming Sunday. During February Council meetings it was decided that Miller Paysour would dig his own well and that the church would purchase a new water pump and equipment. Prior to this time the well was used in common with the church and Miller Paysour. On March 5 Wade Carpenter agreed to erect a bulletin board and small shelf in the narthex of the church. The Council also endorsed an Evangelism program for the church. On March 22 Lester Clark stated that \$175 would cover cost for the well, pump, and equipment and that \$54 would cover the cost of a new electric water heater for the Parish House. The Council approved both purchases. On April 2 the Church Council met at which time it was announced that John Burke Carpenter had resigned from the Council and as Vice Chairman. A discussion was held about giving communion to persons not members of the Lutheran Church. Bayne Harmon suggested that the Council approach the Mauney family about purchasing land in front of the church. Council asked Lester Clark to check into putting an outside drinking fountain at the well. Finally, Preston Kiser, Wade Carpenter, Sammy Kiser, and Forrest Dellinger were appointed to "look into the wasp situation in our Church and try to get this situation eliminated." At this time wasps lived in the church and belltower. Numerous wasps were located in the church during services. On May 6 Council appointed Wade Carpenter to be Vice Chairman. Vesper services were planned for the first and third Sundays starting on June 1. Council approved a \$25 contribution to the Lutheran Home for the Aged on Mother's Day. Council defeated a motion to pay \$320 to the "Synodical Headquarters Building Fund." On July 3 Council met. Pastor Trexler suggested that a lay person be allowed

to assist with the service. Council authorized that \$25 be given each quarter to the Luther League. It was noted that the League had responsibility to do the bulletins each Sunday. At a later called meeting in July the first Sunday in August was established to clean off the graveyard. Council also approved of \$750 being deposited in the Church Building Fund. On August 6 Council voted to pay Rev. Miller for preaching Homecoming. It also voted to purchase 24 new children's hymnals for the Parish House. On September 9 Council elected John Hager to attend the Synod Conference. Mrs. H. S. Kiser donated a new altar Service Book in memory of her husband and son. On October 8 Fredrick Carpenter informed Council that he would "light fires for church and Parish House on Sunday and when necessary without pay." Council postponed painting and repairing the Parish House and back of the church floors until a later time. On December 3 the congregation elected the following new Church Council members: Loy Carpenter Jr., Lester Clark, Frederick Carpenter, and Frank Kiser. The congregation agreed to purchase songbooks for the choir. The congregation agreed to place \$750 into the building fund. It also appointed a committee "to approve arrangements for dividing the Parish House for classes."²

During 1963 Rev. Trexler baptized three infants. On January 16 the Church Council re-elected Earl Payseur as the church treasurer. They also elected Herbert Sellers to serve as Vice Chairman. Pastor Trexler asked each Councilman to visit the Luther League at least once a month and months were assigned. The Council also appointed the Standing Committees for the church. On June 3 the Council discussed re-modeling the Parish House. Council decided to call a congregational meeting at which time the church members could decide whether to brick the Parish House, put aluminum siding on it, or paint it. On the second Sunday in June the congregation met. No decision could be made by the congregation about what to do about the Parish House. The matter was referred back to the Council and Property committee. On July 7 Council met. It decided to paint the Parish House and to install new screens and pipes. The Property Committee also established new goals for the next few years: 1964 - a new roof for the church; 1965 - new Sunday School rooms and brick the Parish House. Council asked Rev. Donald Deal to conduct Homecoming services. Herbert Sellers also reported to the Council about an "elders meeting." Discussion centered around the clause in the constitution which prohibited Council from spending more than \$25 above any line item in the budget. He also related that the elders encouraged deacons to "speak up" at congregational meetings. The Music Committee reported to Council that new Bibles were going to be purchased for

the pulpit and lecturn in memory of Mrs. Spargo Carpenter and Mr. and Mrs. Alex Carpenter by their children. By August 5 the Parish House had been painted by the men of the church. On August 16 Rev. Trexler married Elaine Kiser to Don Kiser. They were to remain faithful members of Bethel after their marriage. On October 7 Council approved the purchase of "folding doors" in the Parish House "in order to make additional rooms" for Sunday School. On December 2 the Council met. Gail Neal was selected the church Sexton with a salary of \$15 per month. On December 8 the congregational meeting was held. The congregation approved the budget and elected the following Church Council members: John Singleton, Mrs. Martha Clark, Mrs. Clarence Kiser, and Claude Carpenter. This meeting was history-making in that it was the first time a woman was elected to serve on the Church Council. At the congregational meeting members discussed the year-end treasurer's report. It showed offering receipts of \$6,119.09 and expenditures of \$5,393.69. From the general fund \$362.16 was transferred to the building fund. The adopted budget for 1964 totalled \$8,720 and included an increase in Benevolence, the pastor's salary for \$2000, and insurance on church properties to be \$192. During the year Rev. Trexler recorded one funeral. He listed the following communicants: 77 on January 6; 16 on February 27; 60 on April 11; 82 on April 14; 74 on June 9; 67 on August 4; 81 on October 6; 77 on December 1.³

The year 1964 would be the last Pastor Trexler would serve at Bethel. On July 13, 1964, he resigned and left Bethel. Before he left he did baptize four children into membership. He also preached one funeral. On January 5 he confirmed a large class of teenage members: Loy Darrell Carpenter, Junnie Lee Hall, Libby Aileen Neal, Steven Luther Clark, Gary Curtis Neal, Patricia Diane Hall, and Carolyn Jane Carpenter. On January 6 Council met. It elected Herbert Sellers to be Vice Chairman and Mrs. Martha Clark secretary. Standing committees were appointed. On February 2 the Council met and adopted "Duties of Sexton". On March 1 Council approved sending two Luther Leaguers to Lenoir Rhyne for "a Leadership Training Course". Council also approved taking up a collection one Sunday "to help needy children at Tryon [School] who couldn't pay for their lunches." On April 5 Council met. Council approved calling an exterminator to check the Parish House for termites. Ransom Kiser and Earl Payseur were nominated to attend Synod. Pastor Trexler discussed with Council some differences he was having in the parish and especially at St. Pauls. He asked for a vote of confidence from Council "to support and cooperate with him." The result of the secret ballot was 8 yes and 2 no. On May 17 Council received

the unfortunate but expected news. Rev. Trexler related that he had "received a call from St. Mark's Lutheran Church Salisbury", and he would decide by May 31. On May 24 Herbert Sellers read the pastor's letter of resignation which became effective on July 13. On June 7 Council elected the following pulpit committee: Mrs. Earl Payseur, John Singleton, Hal Carpenter, and Frederick Carpenter and Loy Carpenter Jr. as alternates. On June 14 Council learned that Rev. R. M. Carpenter was unable to preach at Homecoming, and Council asked Rev. James Walker to be minister. Council also approved a \$50 gift to Rev. Trexler from the general treasury. On August 2 Council approved using loose offering at Homecoming for the purpose of buying new choir robes, which had been suggested by Mrs. Clarence Kiser. On August 9 Council approved spending \$80 for treatment of termites and beetles in the Parish House. On October 4 Council approved spending \$200 for termite treatment of the church. Council discussed the need for a confirmation class but decided to wait until a regular pastor was secured. On December 13 the annual congregational meeting was held. The budget was approved as presented. The congregation elected the following new Church Council members: Jack Carpenter, Howard Carpenter, Sammy Kiser, and Wade Carpenter. With Rev. Trexler's departure the number of communion opportunities declined. The following communicants were listed for the year: 76 on January 5; 87 on March 29; 84 on May 10; 131 on August 9 (Homecoming); 60 on October 4. After Rev. Trexler left, the congregation was served on Sunday by supply pastors. Rev. Charles Bernhardt, pastor of St. John's Cherryville, served during this period as our Vice Pastor.⁴

The pastorate of Rev. Roy Trexler had been a brief but engaging one. Members remember pastor Trexler having a good voice and preaching a good sermon. He was remembered for his vigorous visitation of the membership. He could drop in anytime day or night. While Rev. Trexler was at Bethel, he proposed numerous changes. While only some of his changes were made, many of his suggestions would form the basis of future changes at Bethel. Some issues he brought to the attention of Bethel's members included payment of Bethel's full share of allotted benevolence, an active committee structure in the church, improvement of the Parish House, consolidation of the church's treasuries, strict adherence to the constitution, additional communion services, suggested appointment of a lay person to assist with the service, long-range planning, and purchasing THE LUTHERAN for members. Rev. Trexler was remembered for his ability and inclination toward discussing doctrinal issues. His discussions created thought-provoking responses, and on occasion his discussions turned into little debates.⁵

As 1965 began, the membership longed for a full-time pastor.

On January 3, 1965, the Church Council met and elected John Singleton as Vice Chairman and allowed Martha Clark to continue as secretary. New Council members were assigned to committees. Gail Neal resigned as Sexton, and a replacement was needed. Council approved transferring \$800 from the general fund to the building fund. Current building fund was \$1,902.16. The Luther League was assigned Youth Sunday, the last Sunday in January. On February 7 Council approved putting up another "yard light" near the church. On April 4 a congregational meeting was held. Dr. George R. Whitticar, president of NC Synod, presided. John Singleton made the motion, seconded by Loy Carpenter Jr., to call Wade Norman, a Southern Seminary student, as our next minister. The motion carried 56 to 1. John Singleton then made the motion to pay Wade Norman \$2962 per year salary. Herbert Sellers seconded the motion, but the minutes fail to inform whether the motion carried. On May 9 Council approved spending \$15 to spray the Parish House and church for termites. "John Singleton read a letter from Wade Norman accepting the call to be our pastor." Council approved spending \$87.50 to pay for expenses for Luther Leaguers to attend various conventions and meetings. Council approved paying \$10 to Rev. Bernhardt for being Vice Pastor. Council approved allowing Sunday School classes to take a collection to buy Wade Norman "a gift for the parsonage." On June 1 Rev. Wade Norman assumed his duties at Bethel.⁶

On June 6 Council met. Bible School was set for July 12 to 16. On June 27 a congregational meeting was held. Preston Kiser made the motion, seconded by Sammy Kiser, that the church approve the bid of \$4131.26 by Seth Lumber Company to cover the church with shingles. The motion carried. The congregation voted to raise all money for this project "and take what we lack, if any, out of building fund." The congregation elected Herbert Sellers as treasurer of the building fund. John Singleton suggested that members review the model of the proposed constitution. On July 11 Council met. Claude Carpenter suggested that the church consider purchasing land "across the road from the church if we want it for a parsonage some time in the future." Council took no action. Council decided to raise the money for the covering of the church by having Council members to request pledges from the membership. Council discussed the Sunday School material. While some wanted to return to the Augsburg material, Rev. Norman suggested using as much of the new material as possible. Rev. Norman indicated that he was starting a confirmation class with 11 confirmands. On September 12 Council met. Council approved of presenting the new constitu-

tion to the congregation as written. The amount of \$24 was continued for expenses over an allotted budget item, as in the old constitution. On October 3 Council met. For two months out of three expenditures were greater than receipts in the treasury. Fredrick Carpenter reported to Council that Kenneth Beam would sell the church a lot across the road from the church either at half price or would donate one lot if the church bought one at full price. A meeting with Mr. Beam was set up. Claude Carpenter volunteered to light the heaters in the church for the next year. Council discussed buying THE LUTHERAN and NC LUTHERAN for all members. On November 21 Council met. Council added insurance to the current policy on the Parish House. Pastor Norman discussed the benefits of Benevolence. Council discovered that the general fund balance stood at \$1,684.88 and the building fund balance stood at \$2,826.48. Council approved transferring \$1000 from general fund to building fund. Council approved an every member visit for the Stewardship campaign and appointed Herbert Sellers chairman. Loy Carpenter Sr. asked to be relieved "of his job of taking care of the cemetery." On December 12 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected new Church Councilmen: Herbert Sellers, Robert Smith, John E. Carpenter Jr., and Paul Carpenter. Loy Carpenter Sr. made the motion, seconded by Preston Kiser, to approve the budget as presented. After lengthy discussion Mrs. John Mitchem made the motion, seconded by Loy Carpenter Sr., that Bethel adopt the constitution as presented. Both motions carried. The congregation suggested that Council select a cemetery committee.⁷

On January 15, 1966, the Church Council held its first meeting of the new year. Herbert Sellers reported that he transferred \$3,025 in the repair fund to the bank to draw interest. Council officers which were elected were Sammy Kiser, Vice Chairman, and Martha Clark, Secretary. Committees were appointed. Pastor Norman related that a drive was being sponsored for Lutheran students who attend non-Lutheran colleges. Council suggested Bethel raise \$1200 over 30 months. On February 20 Rev. Norman reported that \$6,500 was pledged in the every member Stewardship visit. On March 20 Council elected Mrs. Lockie Carpenter as Synod delegate. Barbara Kiser resigned as church sexton. On April 17 Council approved for Mrs. Claude Carpenter to become church sexton. Council also approved of additional spraying for termites in the church and Parish House. On May 15 Rev. Norman listed the following confirmands: Robert Carpenter, Billy Carpenter, Franda McAllister, and Johnnie Sue Hall. Council also approved recommending to the LCA Convention that the state not interfere with church activities, that capital punishment be abolished, that all groups have religious

liberty, and that government and church work together to end poverty. On June 19 Council approved placing THE LUTHERAN in each member's home. Council approved sending six members to the Luther League Convention and allowing a Luther League delegate to attend Council meetings. On July 10 a congregational meeting was held. The church was \$781 short of the total needed in the repair fund for the church roofing. A collection and pledges were taken to pay the remainder. Mrs. Lockie Carpenter made the motion, seconded by Miss Ella Kiser, that Bethel pay its full benevolence, an addition of \$770, at year's end if enough money is in the treasury. The motion carried. On July 17 Council voted to paint the church doors "Reformation Red". Council approved painting the Parish House with Luther League help. Council also transferred \$1800 from the general fund into a savings account in order to draw interest.⁸

On August 14 Herbert Sellers on behalf of the Stewardship Committee suggested that Bethel set a goal of raising \$60,000 in the next 10 years in the building fund "to build a parsonage or educational building or anything we see fit." Council approved this goal. On September 18 Council transferred \$800 from the general fund to the building fund. Council also approved purchasing a rug for the nursery and request donation of a bed and play pen. On October 16 Council approved Herbert Sellers's report that a Fellowship meeting would be held to "discuss setting up a new building fund program." This meeting was planned for December 4. On November 20 Council discussed a new heating system for the church. The current gas heaters were "using too much gas and [could not] be regulated properly." The salary of the sexton was increased to \$250 per year, and cleaning the Parish House was added to her duties. The budget was presented at this meeting. It was approved with a \$250 increase in the pastor's salary. Council also stipulated that if St. Pauls did not increase the pastor's salary by \$250 Bethel would give its \$250 to him as a gift. Extensive discussion concerned "pulling away from St. Pauls and going self-supporting." Council approved recommending to the congregation that Bethel become self-supporting. On December 11 the annual congregational meeting was held. The following Council members were elected: Everette Carpenter, Mrs. Forrest Dellinger, Mrs. J. C. Hall, and Preston Kiser. The 1967 budget proposal totalled \$10,619.06. It allowed for purchase of a new heating system for the church and an increase in the pastor's salary. It was approved as presented. The congregation heard the suggestion that Bethel become self-supporting. It approved a motion that we "go self supporting as soon as it could be worked out with St. Pauls." Rev. Norman read a letter from the N. C. Synod president which stated that he would

work with Bethel to achieve self sufficiency. Finally, the will of Miss Ella Kiser was read to the congregation which stated "that all her property go to Bethel Church." The congregation approved selling her six-room house and lot in Lincolnton and of allowing D. C. Kiser and O. L. Kiser to sell this property. During 1966 six infants were baptized at Bethel. Two marriages and two funerals were recorded.⁹

On January 8, 1967, Church Council held its first meeting of the year. Sammy Kiser was re-elected Vice Chairman, and Fern Hall was elected Secretary. Committees were appointed. Council elected Mrs. Claude Carpenter to be treasurer of the building fund. Council discussed "about the lot Mr. Kenneth Beam offered to give to the church for a parsonage." Council appointed a committee "to see about the house plans for a parsonage." Members were Howard Carpenter, Chairman; Mrs. Sue Sellers; Mrs. Annie Lee Paysour; Mrs. Rachel Kiser; and Jack Carpenter. On January 24 Council held a special meeting. Council voted to sell Miss Ella Kiser's house for a bid of \$5000. Council also approved "the one lot [Kenneth Beam] gave for a parsonage the size of the lot is 125 by 200." On March 19 Council met. Building fund receipts for the month were \$84 but the balance on hand was \$6,828.65. Council passed the Evangelism Committee resolution to place a road sign on the Dallas-Cherryville Highway to locate Bethel. Council accepted the gift of candles for the altar from Hugh Carpenter Jr. Howard Carpenter led Council in a discussion of the parsonage plans. Council approved of the parsonage plans as presented and appropriated \$25 for the plans to be drawn. On April 9 Council chose the bid from Ralph Wright to install the new heating system in the church for \$1850. Council elected Ransom Kiser to attend Synod.¹⁰

On May 7 the estate of Miss Ella Kiser was settled. The total received by Bethel was \$11,514.96, which increased the building fund total to \$18,603.61. Council received the donation of Mrs. Dalton Mauney of a furnace for the Parish House and allowed for Ralph Wright to install it. Rev. Norman listed the new confirmands: Brenda Carpenter, Tommy Carpenter, Mickey Jo Kiser, and Katrinka Carpenter. On May 10 Howard Carpenter presented to Council the bids on the parsonage. Council accepted the bid of Nelson Craft for \$18,600. Council also approved purchase of the parsonage lot from Kenneth Beam. Bethel would pay \$1000 for the lot, and Mr. Beam would donate it back to the church. On May 14 a congregational meeting was held. The membership first approved putting insulation in the church and Parish House. Secondly they voted that Bethel build a parsonage. A third motion was approved to build the parsonage on the lot given

by Mr. Beam. After Howard Carpenter presented the parsonage plans, the congregation approved the plans as presented at a cost of \$18,600. Finally, the church officially called Rev. Wade Norman to be its first pastor as a self-sufficient church.¹¹

On May 21 Council approved digging a new well for the church. On June 18 Council met. It received the donation of a bassinet to the nursery by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Sellers. Council approved Texico Oil Company to bury the fuel oil tank and run the lines. Council approved Rev. Norman to preach homecoming. On July 9 Council approached yet another explosive issue. It appointed a committee "to make arrangements about lining-up the tombstones and sowing grass in the cemetery." Members of this committee were Wade Carpenter, Chairman; Loy Carpenter Sr.; Robert Carpenter; Lester Clark; and Ed Harmon. On August 13 Council approved building a cabinet in which to store the communion set. On October 8 Council approved building a pump house for the parsonage well instead of placing the pump in the basement. Council also approved putting THE LUTHERAN in each member's home again. On November 12 Council approved the Stewardship report of Herbert Sellers that an all member visit be held. Council approved insulating the church and Parish House by the membership. Council approved purchasing rods and materials for drapes in the parsonage. Council also reversed its earlier decision and put the pump in the parsonage basement. Council approved allowing for a two-year absence from Council.¹²

On December 2 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected new Council members: Mrs. Rachel Kiser, Don Kiser, Claude Carpenter, and Herman Kiser. The congregation approved of the constitutional change which would require a person to be off the Church Council for two years before he is eligible to return. It approved the 1968 budget as presented, which totalled \$12,915. Included within the budget for the first time was a full-time pastor's salary of \$4,500. It also included the full benevolence apportionment. The members were called upon to increase their donations to meet the budget. The budget resolve implored the membership to "examine our giving habits and resolve, with God's help, to do what we can to see that we do not fail." On December 2 Council met. Council voted to take out insurance with Mr. Olin Rudisill after his presentation. Council voted to elect a new Council member to replace Robert Smith. During 1967 Rev. Norman listed three infants and one adult baptized. He also listed two funerals.¹³

As 1968 began, Bethel congregation had even greater expectations for the future. With the construction of the new parsonage and with Rev. Norman be-

coming the pastor for Bethel Church as a self-supporting congregation, members looked to even greater progress at Bethel. Early in 1968 Council approved buying a refrigerator for the parsonage. With the appropriate members from Bethel having signed the deed for the Crouse parsonage, self-sufficiency was now a legal reality. The year began with Herbert Sellers as Vice Chairman and Fern Hall as Secretary. On January 21, 1968, Council met. The financial reports indicated that a balance of \$953.14 remained in the general fund and \$968.42 remained in the building fund. Pastor Norman reported that at the end of 1966 Bethel had 173 baptized members and at the end of 1967 it had 182 baptized members. Council agreed to have a "manifesto study with the Church Council meetings." Committees were assigned to all Council members. Council re-elected Earl Payseur as church treasurer and Mrs. Claude Carpenter as building fund treasurer. Council also approved placing six inch insulation in the church and Parish House for a bid of \$484.50. On February 11 Council met. The building fund received \$3,850 from St. Pauls Crouse as Bethel's part of the value of the Crouse parsonage. This addition plus receipts for January and expenditures made the balance \$3,136.42. Individual church members were added to the church committees. Council also approved having the parsonage wired for a dryer and voted to pay the insulation bill out of the building fund.¹⁴

On March 1 a catastrophe struck the congregation. In the midst of evident growth and expansion Council was informed that "our Pastor had left." Council informed Dr. Biedenback. "Our Pastor is emotionally upset and wishes to leave the ministry." Another brief Council meeting was held on March 4. Pastor Norman had talked with Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Sellers, but "no decision was reached." On March 10 "a letter of resignation was read from Pastor Norman. Dr. Whitticar asked us not to accept this at this time." On March 17 Council met after the service to discuss the situation but no decision had yet been made. Finally, on March 31 a motion was made and seconded to "accept the resignation of Pastor Wade Norman." The following persons were elected to the Pulpit Committee: John Singleton, Mrs. Prue Carpenter, Don Kiser, Mrs. Lester Clark, Mrs. Earl Payseur, and Wade Carpenter. Our Vice Pastor was Rev. Smith from St. Marks. Council elected John E. Carpenter Jr. to attend Synod Convention. Council approved that Mrs. Norman be allowed to remain in the parsonage "for 2 more weeks." Council also approved buying literature for the Luther League. On April 7 a congregational meeting was held. The congregation voted to accept his resignation.¹⁵ So closed the history-making pastorate of Rev. Wade Norman.

On April 14 the Council approved allowing the Pulpit Committee "to raise the salary for the Pastor if necessary." During this time Rev. Bruce Sigmon served as our supply pastor. At a called update meeting the Pulpit Committee recommended to Council that Bethel extend a call to Rev. Clarence Sifford. Council approved the call and planned a congregational meeting. On May 12 Council held its regular meeting. Council approved allowing the Luther League to mow the grass for \$15 per month. It also delayed buying a lawnmower. Council approved the following confirmands: Cynthia Clark, Sandra Carpenter, Susan Carpenter, and Beth Pasour. On May 19 Council met and altered the budget to include an increase in the pastor's salary from \$4,500 to \$5,600; reduced the car expense from \$1000 to \$500; raised the pension from \$490 to \$538; and reduced the vacation from three weeks to two weeks. All these proposals were accepted in separate motions. Council also voted to purchase an Arien lawnmower for \$350. On May 26 the congregational meeting was held. The congregation approved calling Rev. Clarence E. Sifford Jr. as pastor. Congregation also approved the recommended changes in the budget. The waiting game began.¹⁶

On June 9 Council met. The property committee planned to "fix the lights in Church." An open house for the parsonage was planned "for everyone to visit." The annual termite control was again approved. On July 14 Council held its annual meeting. It asked Rev. Smith from St. Marks to serve as Homecoming minister. Council approved allowing individual Sunday School classes to determine whether it wanted "the new material or go back to the Augsburg." Council planned to clean the grounds and cemetery for homecoming. Council accepted the donation by Burton Payseur of shrubbery for the parsonage. On August 11 Council met and was informed that the Adult class "voted to return to the Old Sunday School material." On September 8 Council voted to withdraw \$1000 from the general fund and deposit into the building fund. On October 13 Council continued in the everyday functions of the church. Plans were made for next year's budget, for subscribing to the NC LUTHERAN, and for checking Sunday School lights and heat. A request for a \$220 loan for a mission congregation was turned down by Council vote. Rev. Sifford had turned down Bethel's call. The Pulpit Committee requested advice from Council since Synod had not given them any more names of pastors to visit. On November 10 Council approved another transfer of \$1000 from the general fund to the building fund. Council approved placing storm windows in the Parish House. Council approved selling the old Parish House heater to Herman Kiser for \$50. Council appointed Claude Carpenter to turn on the heat in the church. Council recommended a budget of \$13,780 to the congre-

gation for 1969. Council also adopted a new policy for electing Council members, which would allow the congregation to nominate eight persons with the top four vote-getters getting elected. Council also appointed a committee to consider recognizing the gift of Miss Ella Kiser to the church. On December 8 the annual congregational meeting was held. New Church Council members were elected: Frank Carpenter, Don Pasour, Kenneth Rudisill, and John Singleton. The congregation approved the 1969 budget as presented. On the same day Council met after the service. Council discussed placing a plaque on the parsonage in memory of Miss Ella Kiser's gift. Council approved Johnnie Sue and Junnie Lee Hall to clean the offering plates for the next year. Council approved Earl Payseur and Mrs. Claude Carpenter as treasurers for next year. It also approved retaining Mrs. Sue Sellers, Mrs. Carolyn Kiser, and Mrs. Iris Carpenter as organists. During 1968 four infants were baptized, and one funeral was held.¹⁷

With the end of 1968 Bethel had experienced seven years of growth and expansion which had been the result of progressive leadership from its pastor and lay leaders. The congregation had improved the church, Parish House, and cemetery. The congregation had dared to challenge the future. Bethel chose to separate from St. Pauls, Crouse, with whom our congregation had been associated for over 100 years, to take full responsibility for its religious life by calling its own full-time pastor, and to build its own parsonage. Bethel had accomplished all these improvements without going into debt. For the people of Bethel the future appeared bright.

1 Churchbook I. Record of Church Council Minutes found at Bethel Church, microfilmed by N. C. Division of Archives & History, June 25, 1980, pp. 5-13, recorded as Council Minutes I. Claude Carpenter Interview.

2 Churchbook II located at Bethel Church. Council Minutes I, pp. 15-42.

3 Churchbook II. Council Minutes I, pp. 43-60. Loose papers found in the Minutes book were also used.

4 Churchbook II. Council Minutes I, pp. 63-86.

5 Claude Carpenter Interview. Discussion of Mrs. Annie Lee Payseur and Mr. Herbert Sellers at Celebration Committee meeting attended by the author. Recollections of the author.

6 Council Minutes I, pp. 87-94.

7 Ibid., pp. 95-108.

8 Ibid., pp. 109-125.

9 Ibid., pp. 127-139. Churchbook II.

- 10 Council Minutes I, pp. 140-147.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 148-153.
- 12 Ibid., pp. 154-168.
- 13 Ibid., pp. 169-171. Churchbook II.
- 14 Council Minutes I, pp. 172-178.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 177-178.
- 16 Ibid., pp. 179-185.
- 17 Ibid., pp. 186-197. Churchbook II.

Chapter 9

REV. TOMMY K. BEAVER AND THE EDUCATIONAL BUILDING

The self sufficiency of Bethel congregation and its construction of a parsonage had been great accomplishments. Yet, with the departure of Rev. Wade Norman and with the call rejection of Rev. Clarence Sifford, much uncertainty remained. Even though supply pastor, Rev. Bruce Sigmon, faithfully served the congregation, the membership agreed that for future success a regular minister was a necessity. The congregation expected that with appropriate pastoral leadership continued growth and an expanded building program may be attempted. Under such circumstances Bethel Church searched for a pastor.

On January 12, 1969, the first Church Council of the new year was held. The balance in the general fund was \$1,525.04, and building fund balance was \$4,671.03. Council elected John Singleton as Vice Chairman and re-elected Fern Hall as Secretary. Council approved Kenneth Rudisill to become Luther League counselor with the help of another member who later was Mary Frances Carpenter. Council appointed the standing committees. On February 9 Council discussed repair to the parking lot. Kenneth Rudisill agreed to donate the gravel to the parking lot. Because "Pastor Sigmon has been such a good supply Pastor and has been doing so much for our members who have been sick", Council considered doing something special to show Bethel's appreciation. On February 26, the Pulpit Committee recommended to Council that Bethel Church call Tommy Beaver, currently a Southern Seminary student, as our next pastor. Council approved the recommendation "after some discussion." On the same day the congregation voted to call Tommy Beaver as pastor. The call was made by a unanimous vote. On March 9 Council met and appointed a Cemetery Committee to put the cemetery into lots with a map: Howard Carpenter, Kenneth Rudisill, Don Kiser, and Mrs. Violet Caldwell. By the next meeting Tommy Beaver had accepted Bethel's call to become its new minister. On April 13 Council approved allowing Rev. Beaver to purchase an air conditioner for the parsonage. Bethel congregation looked forward with anticipation to the formalization of the pastorate of Rev. Beaver.¹

On July 13 Council met. Council asked the property committee to "see about air conditioner for the parsonage." Council approved \$213.20 for the purchase of a desk and file cabinet for the pastor's study in the parsonage. Council approved \$412 for moving Rev. Beaver into the parsonage. Council appointed September 14 the Sunday for Beaver's installation. Council approved using the Memorial Fund for Loy Carpenter Sr. for the cemetery. Sammy Kiser was appointed the Cemetery Fund Treasurer. On August 3 Council asked the property committee to study the heating system in the church, approved bringing to the congregation the purchase of an air conditioner and desk and file cabinet for the parsonage, and approved all donations on Homecoming Sunday to go the Cemetery Fund. On August 17 the congregation approved the purchase of the desk, file cabinet, and air conditioner. On August 31 "proposed rules and regulations for the cemetery" were approved by the Council. On September 14 Rev. Beaver and John L. Singleton led in the dedication of the parsonage. On October 5 Council authorized the evangelism committee to erect a sign for the church. Pastor Beaver reported that he gave communion to all shut-ins last month. On November 2 Council approved the purchase of three electric heaters for the Sunday School rooms. Council accepted the 1970 budget as presented by the finance committee. Council approved a Thanksgiving service and a Christmas Eve service. On December 7 Council met. Council approved allowing Paul Carpenter to assist Rev. Beaver with communion. Council approved a motion to "get enough gravel to fix the church yard." Council approved the apportionment (benevolence) goal of \$2,340 and to "strive to achieve the challenge goal of \$3,600.00." On December 14 the congregation elected the following Council members: Mrs. Violet Caldwell, Wade Carpenter, Howard Carpenter, and Lester Clark. The congregation approved the budget of \$14,850. During 1969 there were three infant baptisms and three funerals. G. Loy Carpenter and D. C. Kiser, leaders in the church, died and were buried in the church cemetery.²

During 1970 Bethel congregation began to adjust to the leadership of Rev. Beaver. It experienced continued growth with increased interest and new programs. On January 4, 1970, Church Council held its first meeting of the new year. The balance in the building fund was \$4,712.71 at the end of the year. The Council elected John Singleton as Vice Chairman and Rachel Kiser as Secretary. Council appointed new members to committees. Council approved spending "1% more or \$38.03" to church benevolence. Pastor Beaver suggested that the film strip be used to present the Concern program, a call for donations to

the Lutheran Homes. In February Council met. Council approved purchasing ten Bibles for Sunday School classes. The evangelism committee reported that "their group meeting [was] filled with enthusiasm." Pastor Beaver reported plans to organize the Lutheran Men, to encourage the children to attend Lutheridge, and to have a worship service at Lutheridge.³

On February 8 the congregation approved accepting the congregation's base goal for the Concern program. On February 15 Council approved the transfer of \$90 from the general fund to the cemetery fund. On February 22 the congregation approved getting new red altar paraments. Mrs. John Mitchem stated that she would donate the red paraments in memory of John Mitchem. The congregation then voted to buy a purple funeral pall for \$125. On March 2 the Council met. Council accepted the offer of Herman Kiser, Mrs. S. O. Kiser, and Sammy Kiser to donate the funeral pall in memory of S. O. Kiser, Sr. Council discussed changing the opening and closing of Sunday School. Council acknowledged that congregational response to a Lutheridge service was favorable. Plans were discussed for a retreat to Kure Beach by Luther Leaguers from Bethel, St. Pauls, and St. Marks. Council also heard plans for the Easter services. On April 5 Council transferred \$1000 from the general fund to the building fund. The Lutheridge service date was set for June 14. The Luther League will go to Kure Beach from July 19-21 with about ten youth from our church planning to attend. On May 3 the stewardship committee reported to Council that the congregation had surpassed its goal in the Concern drive. Council discussed at length plans for evangelism in the community. The property committee reported that they had been working on improving the Parish House kitchen. Future plans would include new floor covering and more painting. Council elected Violet Caldwell as Synod delegate and Mrs. John Mitchem and Mrs. John Carpenter as LCW Convention delegates. On May 17 Council met and decided to take a "free will offering" to give to Mr. and Mrs. Preston Kiser, whose house burned. On June 7 Council heard from Mr. Long about how to improve heating in the church. Council also voted to pay \$20 per month to have the church grounds and cemetery cut. On June 21 Council decided to set up a Memorial Fund and appointed Violet Caldwell as its treasurer. Mrs. Herman Kiser donated a new acolyte robe which she made in honor of Mrs. S. O. Kiser Sr.⁴

On July 5 Council allowed for the Cemetery Fund to pay for all grass mowing. The property committee reported that the ceiling of the Parish House had been painted and another work day was planned. Council voted to appropriate \$10 to assist the Church Women in sending get well cards to the sick

and shut in. Pastor Beaver was appointed to deliver the Homecoming sermon. At this meeting John Singleton discussed a proposal to set a goal for the building fund in order to add more Sunday School rooms or to build a new church and educational building. Pastor Beaver volunteered to look into such a project. On August 2 Council met. It was noted that the congregation was meeting its budget each month. At a called meeting on August 23 Council voted to purchase a tape recorder which cost \$55. On September 6 Council decided to have a work day for the Parish House which would include painting it, replacing its vents, and other repairs. Council decided to purchase "Celebrate", an insert for the bulletin, for one year to assist the service. Sue Sellers requested a "rest" from being full-time organist. Iris Carpenter and "some of our young organists" were to help her. Council complimented "the young people for their musical program." Pastor Beaver reported to Council that a committee of about seven to nine persons was needed to study the church's building plans. Council also voted to transfer \$1000 from the general fund to the building fund. On October 4 Council met. Council agreed for the Luther League to be divided into two age groups. It was reported that the tape recorder was being used to tape the services and was being taken to the shut ins. Council agreed for lay readers to continue to assist with the service. Herbert Sellers would be the next lay reader. Council heard a presentation about church bonds which would be used to finance a building project. "All council members were asked to serve on planning committee to begin work on plans for new building so there will be something that can be presented to congregation."⁵

Council met on November 1. The social ministry committee reported that a food committee had been established to take food to the family of deceased members. Earl Payseur resigned as church treasurer. After discussion Council approved asking Sue Sellers and Prue Carpenter to serve as church treasurers. Plans were made to visit educational buildings of other churches, and all Council members were urged to attend. On December 6 Council met. Council approved Prue Carpenter as the new church treasurer and Sue Sellers as the new financial secretary. Council approved recommending an architect to study and draw up building plans. This recommendation would be presented to the congregation. Council approved two services on Christmas Eve at 7:30 and 11:00. Council approved \$100 to pay for Christmons which were being made by various members. On December 13 the regular congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected the following Council members: Iris Carpenter, Sammy Kiser, Elaine Kiser, and Eunice Kiser. It also approved the budget as presented.

Kenneth Rudisill presented the Council recommendations about future building plans. After discussion the congregation approved hiring an architect to study our needs and to draw up plans. During 1970 Rev. Beaver baptized 12 infants and one adult. Two marriages and two funerals were recorded.⁶

On January 3, 1971, the Church Council held its first meeting of the year. Council elected John Singleton as Vice Chairman and Elaine Kiser as secretary. Committee appointments were made. Council approved paying Bethel's full benevolence by October if the funds were available at that time. Council approved purchase of six Bibles for use in Sunday School. Rev. Beaver reported attendance at Christmas Eve services was as follows: 45 at 7:30 and 39 at 11:00. On January 17 Council decided at a called meeting to spend \$390 to repair the heating system for the church. On February 7 Council heard that members had almost completed the "parament cabinet". The following members were approved to serve on the "building planning committee": Violet Caldwell, Hal Carpenter, Sammy Kiser, John Singleton, Gerald Chapman, Fern Hall, Rachel Kiser, and Herbert Sellers. The work of Gene Wyont, youth advisor, was also discussed at this time. On March 14 at a called meeting Council planned to attend Lutheridge for services again this summer with St. Pauls, Crouse and planned a congregational dinner in honor of the confirmants. On April 4 Sherry Carpenter, Dennis Kiser, John Mitchem III, and Larry McAllister were confirmed into the church. On April 7 Council learned that the church deed had not been located. Council agreed to hire a lawyer to do what is necessary to discover the land boundaries. Council also discussed buying additional property next to the cemetery.⁷

On May 2 Council met. Social ministry committee reported on helping a local family which was needy. Council appointed Sammy Kiser to contact a lawyer "to draw up deed for church property." Vacation Bible School was planned for June 7-11. On June 6 Council learned that the "young people" would canvass the neighborhood to invite persons to Bible School. On July 4 Council met. Council approved the transfer of \$1000 from general fund to building fund. Council invited Rev. Sigmon to preach the August 8 Homecoming, but since he was unable to do so Rev. Beaver led the Homecoming services. On July 25 at a called Council meeting Council planned a congregational meeting to discuss the purchase of additional property adjacent to the cemetery. On August 1 Council appointed a committee to meet with the property owners to discuss buying the property. On August 22 the congregation approved purchasing one acre of land for the price of \$3000. It also voted to take the money for the purchase out of the building

fund. On August 29 at a called Council meeting Hoke Heavener was approved as the surveyor for the new property. A hamburger supper for Council members and their families was planned for September 4, and John Singleton, Sammy Kiser, and Wade Carpenter were elected church trustees. On September 4 after the family supper Council heard plans for a mission developer to speak to the church. A meeting of September 9 was planned with the architect. Further discussion was held about not yet having hired a lawyer to research the old church deed. Council heard that junior choir robes were being made by Shirley Carpenter and were almost complete. Because of poor attendance at junior choir and youth ministry both programs were temporarily discontinued.⁸

On October 3 John L. Beam, architect, met with Council. Council and the planning committee approved employing Mr. Beam as the architect for the new building. Council approved paying the "remaining portion of the benevolence." It was reported that Mr. Allran is researching the church deed, and it was reported that the Parish House roof was leaking. At this meeting the following new members were approved to be received into membership: Linda and Ricky Green, Mrs. Carmen Bryant, Mike Carpenter, and O. L. and Fanny Kiser. On November 7 Council met. Council approved the program "Welcome to the Lord's Table" to be given to fifth graders for one year and the program "Confirmation & First Communion" to be given to adults. On November 21 Council approved \$275 for Worth Hoffman to cover the Parish House. On December 5 Council met. The deeds for the property had been signed, and the lawyer was to finalize the transaction. Council approved of the proposed budget for 1972 of \$18,366.50. It also approved of Sue Sellers and Prue Carpenter to continue as treasurers. The property committee reported that the Parish House had been roofed and that gravel had been purchased for the church. On December 12 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected Darrell Carpenter, Oscar Kiser, Loy Carpenter, and Herbert Sellers as new Council members. It approved the 1972 budget as presented. It also authorized John Singleton, Sammy Kiser, and Wade Carpenter to sign the contract with the architect. During 1971 there were three infant and two adult baptisms. There was one marriage and two funerals.⁹

On January 2, 1972, the Church Council held its first meeting of the year. Council elected Elaine Kiser as Vice Chairman and Violet Caldwell as Secretary of Council. This event was the first time a female held both positions of importance on the Council. Council approved removing Herbert Sellers as Sunday School Superintendent and replacing him with John Burke Carpenter. The social ministry committee reported meeting with "three black people from our community

to get to know one another better." Council suggested that the stewardship committee visit those members who did not pledge and to invite them to church. On January 30 a congregational meeting was held with J. L. Beam, who discussed the architectural plans he had drawn for Bethel's "Building Plans". Beam suggested that the construction be in phases with the first phase being the educational building. He further suggested that the building "be moved to North section of property". On February 6 the congregation met and discussed "ways to make up money for Building Fund." On February 6 the Council met. Council asked Darrell Carpenter to place some church road signs in appropriate places. Work on the church windows was to begin soon. Council asked ushers to count attendance at the worship service.¹⁰ overshadowing the everyday activities of the church was the future plans for the church building project.

On February 13, 1972, the congregation held a meeting to finalize plans for the building project. Elaine Kiser presided at this history-making meeting. Herbert Sellers made a lengthy motion which had been prepared by the Planning Committee. The motion called for Bethel congregation to "proceed, as we become financially able, with the intentions of beginning phase one, the Educational Building, with the guidance of the architect, Building Committee and the congregation of Bethel Lutheran Church which is the final authority." After a second Oscar Kiser "talked on history and growth of Bethel Lutheran Church." Members voted by secret ballot. The motion was approved with 66 in favor and 7 against. Oscar Kiser then presented the finance committee's plans for raising the money: a cash gift to be paid in 90 days; weekly or monthly pledge for 1972; an estimated pledge for 1973; and an estimated pledge for 1974. The plan for raising the money was approved by the congregation. Pledge cards were distributed at the meeting with plans to return them at the next congregational meeting. On February 27 the congregation met to discuss the building project. Further discussion was foregone in anticipation of the fund drive report.¹¹

On March 5 the Council met to resume regular church business. Vacation Bible School was set for June 5-9. Plans were formalized for the men of the church to begin meeting. Council approved purchasing a church sign to be placed along the road. Property concerns included replacing the ceiling in the church, putting siding on the Parish House, and fertilizing the yard. A church and grounds clean up day was scheduled for March 25. On April 2 Council met. The cemetery maps had been completed. On April 23 Council appointed Mrs. John Mitchem as Synod delegate. On May 7 Council met and discovered that the current balance in the building fund had grown to \$15,880.80. Council also approved

transferring \$1000 from the general fund to the building fund. Council approved for Wade Carpenter Jr. and Michael Gregg to mow the church and cemetery grounds. Council also approved the purchase of linoleum for the Parish House kitchen floor. Council approved buying ten new hymnals and appointed Darrell and Patricia Carepnter as new youth advisors. On May 14 Council asked Pastor Beaver to preach at Homecoming. Council also graciously received the donation of 15 hymnals to the choir by Mrs. Mamie Mitchem. On June 4 Council met. Council commended Prue Carpenter for "setting up Vacation Bible School." The building fund had grown to \$19,507.31. Council approved of Lockie Carpenter to attend LCW Convention. Council approved purchasing "Clorinator" for the well. Council also approved painting the Parish House. On July 15 Council appointed John Singleton, Sammy Kiser, and Violet Caldwell to serve "as Building Commissioners to work with architect." Council also discussed "lack of interest in Youth Ministry." On August 5 Council met. Council approved transferring \$1000 from the general fund to the building fund. Council approved a motion to repair the church ceiling. The property committee reported that tile had been bought to cover the kitchen, nursery, and bath room floors in the Parish House. The new church sign had been put up. The worship and music committee requested that 50 more bulletins be ordered each Sunday. Council approved this request which demonstrated how church membership continued to increase. On September 3 Council planned a cook out for Council members and families for September 30. On the same day another significant congregational meeting was held concerning the building program.¹²

On September 3 the congregation approved the recommendation from Council to appoint John Singleton, Sammy Kiser, and Violet Caldwell as "a Building Commission" to work with the architect. John Singleton presented the building plan for "Phase I". After discussion and "with minor changes" the congregation voted to accept the plans as presented. Sue Sellers presented the "Financial Plans" which included getting a loan from Carolina National Bank in Lincolnton for \$45,000 to be paid back in ten years. The congregation approved the loan and financial plan. Finally, the congregation authorized the property committee to "go ahead with plans" to repair the ceiling in the church. With all plans now established church members waited with anticipation for the new construction.¹³

On September 30 Council met after its cook out. The Christian education committee noted that adult Sunday School attendance was very good. Workshops for teachers had been attended and others were planned. Plans for the "Con-

firmation and First Communion" seminar was finalized for the Council. On October 8 a congregational meeting was held to make an amendment to the "motion made on borrowing money for Building Plans." Oscar Kiser explained that the bank wanted $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ interest if the loan were completed within six months. But if the loan were not completed within six months, the bank would "charge the prevailing rate of interest less $\frac{1}{2}\%$." John Singleton made the motion that the above proposal be adopted. After further discussion the motion was approved. On November 5 Council met. It approved the 1973 budget which totalled \$21,369.24. A stewardship sponsored "Chicken and Dumpling supper" was planned for November 17. At a called meeting on November 12 Council approved buying a used stove for the Parish House for \$35. On December 3 Council continued its sessions on "Confirmation and First Communion" which were being taught by Pastor Beaver. Council approved giving Christmas treats to Sunday School members. The ceiling had been repaired in the church. The congregation had donated clothing to a needy family. Plans were established for the Christmas Play to be held on December 22 and the Candlelight services to be held at 7:30 on Christmas Eve. On December 10 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected the following Church Council members for three year terms: Johnnie Sue Brittain, Billy Carpenter, Curtis Neal, and Frances Singleton. Oscar Kiser presented the budget. After discussion a motion was made to vote on the budget in two sections. This motion did not carry. The motion to "accept the budget as proposed" was seconded and passed. John Singleton discussed building plans and stated that the architect "will be ready to start in January."¹⁴

The year 1972 had begun with a balance of \$1025.16 in the Building Fund. After a transfer from the Gastonia account of \$4888.95 and a transfer from the general treasury of \$1000, the account totalled \$6914.11. Rev. Tommy K. Beaver had led the membership to make significant committments toward the building program. Pledge cards were circulated which requested an initial cash gift and pledges for 1972, 1973, and 1974. A thorough system of monitoring these pledges meant that a very large number of them were returned with a high level of committment. From January 1 through December 31 the members contributed \$18,876.50. In addition "Friends" of the congregation donated \$1807.38. Interest on the account totalled \$895.76. The Church Council transferred \$2000 from the general account to the Building Fund. When December 31 rolled around Bethel Church congregation had totalled \$30,484.75 in its Building Fund. The outpouring of support had been a God-given inspiration to all the congregation.

During 1972 Rev. Beaver baptized four infants and two adults. He listed one marriage and two funerals. While the Building Fund campaign was very successful, the inspired congregation continued to contribute to the general fund which supported everyday operations at the church. Contributions for 1972 totalled \$22,349.98. Of this total \$19,689.50 came from envelope offerings with Sunday School offerings being \$1025.14.¹⁵

On January 11, 1973, the Church Council met. New Council members were assigned to committees. Elaine Kiser was to continue as Vice Chairman of the Council and Frances Singleton was elected Secretary. Pastor Beaver reported that \$11 was spent for three pictures of the hand-carved ornaments which Claude Carpenter has made and placed on his Christmas tree. These pictures were sent to the Lincoln Times, the Gastonia Gazette, and the N. C. Lutheran. The property committee suggested that Fredrick Carpenter be asked to fix the ceiling in the church with the help of other members. Darrell Carpenter also suggested that the timber on the new property be cut and sold with money to be placed into the building fund. On January 14 a congregational meeting was held. John Singleton reported on the progress of the architect. The secretary reported that Carolina First National Bank in Lincolnton had approved the \$45,000 loan with 7½% interest. Sue Sellers reported on the building fund goal and its progress. She recalled that in 1972 the church set a goal of \$30,000 to be in the building fund. The drive started with \$6,914.11 in the building fund. A total of \$20,674.88 was contributed. Council transferred \$2000 from the general fund to the building fund. A total of \$895.76 was collected in interest. All made a total of \$30,484.75. Oscar Kiser reported that the new goal would be \$15,000 for 1973, and building fund pledge cards were distributed at the end of the meeting. The congregation approved a motion to cut and sell the timber on the new property with proceeds going to the building fund.¹⁶ Bethel's enthusiasm bubbled forth with this meeting which demonstrated the members' faith and dedication toward the building project.

On February 4 Council met. Oscar Kiser reported that pledges for the building fund totalled \$8500 for 1973. Council approved allowing Fredrick Carpenter to repair the ceiling in the church using "material most suitable for him". Duties of the sexton was discussed but no changes were made. Council finalized plans to sell the timber on the new property. On March 4 Council met briefly to authorize paying for the axle on the bulldozer and for fuel and repairs to it. It also suggested adding a storage room under the Educational Building. On April 1 Council selected Prue Carpenter to be superintendent of Vacation

Bible School. Council approved taking money out of the general fund "to pay for mowing lawn & cemetery." John Singleton reported that putting a storage room under the Educational Building would not be feasible. On May 6 Council transferred \$1500 from general fund to the building fund. Council approved Vacation Bible School to be June 11-15 from 6:15-8:15. It was agreed that the parsonage needed painting. On June 3 the youth had the church service. On June 6 Council met. The following confirmands would be confirmed: Michael David Carpenter, Franklin Sidney Carpenter, Wade Lathan Carpenter, Jr., Michael Franklin Gregg, Peggy Diane Carpenter, and Cynthia Sue Pasour. Council approved taking \$75 from the miscellaneous account to give to the Bethel softball team. John Singleton recommended that Council accept the Educational Building bid of W. G. Holland with addition of concrete block partitions and without vinyl flooring. The total bid was \$70,151. A separate bid for carpeting would be allowed. Council accepted the bid. Council approved for Mr. Lewis to dig a well for the Educational Building. Council appointed Mrs. Beaver to attend the N. C. Synod. On June 10 the congregation met to accept the bid for the Educational Building. John Singleton presented the options to the church. A motion was accepted that the congregation vote on each alternate option separately. The motion to leave vinyl asbestos tile in the project was defeated. A motion to leave air conditioning in the bid was approved. The motion to accept the entire bid of \$70,151 for the Educational Building was made and passed. Sue Sellers reported that \$45,000 was available from the loan for 7 3/4% interest. The congregation voted to allow Lewis Well Company to drill a well. On June 24 Council met and authorized John Singleton and Frances Singleton to represent the church in signing the contract with W. G. Holland. Plans were discussed for the ground breaking on July 15 and having services at Lutheridge on August 19.¹⁷

On July 1 Council met. Plans were finalized for the ground breaking on July 15. They included having Kermit Hull to take pictures and to invite all who contributed. The Lutheridge service was set for August 19. On August 5 the Council approved of taking the remainder of the money set aside for the repair of the ceiling and putting it into the building fund. The amount would be about \$1800. It was reported to the Council that Lewis was unable to dig a well at the Educational Building. A new agreement was reached with Blackburn to drill the well for \$5 per foot. The loan was signed by church trustees: Wade Carpenter, Sammy Kiser, and John Singleton. On September 2 Council agreed to sell the antique chairs at the church by sealed bids in lots of four. Mrs. Mitchem had

loaned the church \$1000 for five years interest free. Council approved of Sue Sellers as building fund secretary. The \$1800 in the church ceiling account was transferred to the building fund treasury. "Fredrick Carpenter donated ceiling in the church." Council authorized Oscar Kiser to explain to the congregation why the church was using its borrowed money first. On October 7 Council transferred \$1000 from general fund to the building fund. The property committee reported receiving three bids of \$25 for nine chairs. These bids were accepted. Council approved the wishes of the contractor to take out more trees to assist with drainage. On October 28 the Council agreed to remove even more trees to make room for the parking area. On November 4 Council approved the budget for 1974. On December 2 Council met. The Council authorized the property committee to check on the purchase of storm windows and doors for the parsonage, erecting a security light, and buying a ladder. Worship and music committee reported that the Thanksgiving service was a success, that the Christmas Play was scheduled for December 23, and that the candlelight service was to be on December 24 at 8:00. Council approved transferring \$500 form general fund to building fund. Council discussed paving the parking lot at the Educational Building. It also approved for Bethel to sponsor a Girl Scout troop. On December 9 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected the following Council members: Frank Carpenter, Mrs. Earl Payseur Mrs. Herman Kiser, and Paul Carpenter. The congregation accepted the budget as presented. John Singleton gave a progress report on the Educational Building. The congregation approved the motion to spend \$2550 to have the parking lot around the ¹⁸Educatonal Building paved by W. G. Holland.

During 1973 the members of Bethel Church supported the general fund by donating \$22,817.80 to the work of the Lord. Of this amount \$1054.08 came from the Sunday School, and \$21,233.64 came from envelope offering. During 1973 Rev. Beaver baptized one adult and two infants. He listed three funerals.¹⁹

On January 6, 1974, the Church Council met and appointed the new members to committees. It elected Annie Lee Payseur as Vice Chairman and Carolyn Kiser as secretary. The stewardship committee reported setting the goal of \$13,000 per year for the next three years in order to pay off the loan. Council accepted this proposal. Council agreed to take the furnace Loy Carpenter Jr. had donated and have it installed. Council authorized payment on the storm windows, doors, and on the paint purchased for the parsonage. The Educational Building was "almost complete" with the carpet yet to install. Council commended Sue Sellers and Prue Carpenter "for the good work they have done on the books." On

January 20 a congregational meeting was held. John Singleton reported to the church membership that the Educational Building was almost finished. The hope was verbalized that the congregation could begin using the building in four or six weeks. Sue Sellers reported that the balance in the building fund was \$25,799.12. Oscar Kiser recommended setting a goal of raising \$15,000 this year toward payment of the loan. The congregation accepted this recommendation. John Singleton made the motion authorizing Sue Sellers to keep \$2000 in the building fund "and when it exceeds minimum to apply to principal on loan."²⁰ This motion carried.

February 3 Council met and discussed plans to move into the Educational Building. Council approved the purchase of a record player from the Memorial Fund. It also approved purchase of a table for the nursery. Council discussed fencing the air conditioning units and approved buying plastic pipe to run a water line from the Educational Building to the parsonage. The new security light had been installed at the Educational Building. Because of "slick floors" in the church, Council authorized the property committee to review the problem and to contact the carpet company about putting carpet in the church. On February 10 Council approved insuring the Educational Building with Lincoln-Gaston Mutual until October 1. On February 17 Council approved buying a new vacuum cleaner for the Educational Building at a cost of \$270. On March 3 Council met in the new Educational Building. Pastor Beaver read a letter from Dr. Whitticar, N. C. Synod president, commending Bethel on paying our benevolence apportionment in full. The insurance on the Educational Building was set at \$80,000 and \$10,000 on contents. Council approved tearing down the building located behind the Parish House. The homecoming tables would be stored in Miller Paysour's barn. Pastor Beaver reported that he had been given \$600 to purchase a film projector. Council accepted the gift. The floors in the church had been cleaned of excess wax. It was hoped that no one would fall again. Council discussed sowing grass and planting shrubs around the Educational Building. Plans were discussed for an Educational Building Open House. Council approved Rev. Beaver to plan this event and to invite Synod officials. Council approved paying \$75 to sponsor the Bethel softball team "if the team is played by the rules, that players must attend church 50% of time." On April 7 the Educational Building was dedicated at a service held at 3:00. Rev. Terry W. Agner, assistant to the N. C. Synod president, gave the dedicatory address. He said that "we at Bethel now have the tools to do the work necessary to train our children the best possible way. The new Building is done, our work is to sow the seeds."

Rev. Jack E. Smith, dean of the Southwestern District, participated in the ceremony as did Rev. Beaver. A reception and open house followed the dedication service. The women of the church had prepared cake squares and punch which was served with peanuts. On April 7 Council met. The dedication service for the Educational Building was described as "very meaningful. Good number present." Council approved Bible School for the mornings starting June 17. The property committee reported that cement was poured around the air conditioner unit and it was fenced. Council approved raising the pay for the boys who cut the grass to \$1.90 per hour. Council approved purchasing new furniture for the Educational Building. It was reported that the Cemetery Fund had a total of \$477.49. "Pastor Beaver thanked everyone for their help in the Dedication Service." Council approved allowing Diane Kiser to use the church organ to practice on as she takes organ lessons. "Someone wants to donate a piano" to the Educational Building. Council accepted and requested other donations to be used for purchase of furniture. On April 28 a congregational meeting was held to discuss purchasing furniture. John Singleton led the discussion. The congregation agreed to purchase "the better quality furniture". The congregation also approved paving a 12 foot strip in front of the church when the Educational Building lot was paved. A new piano was donated to the Educational Building "in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Forrest Allen Sr. and Mr. Ernest Stroup by Mr. & Mrs. Forrest Allen Jr." The congregation also recognized pastor Beaver with Mrs. Beaver "for all the extra effort for the little things they have done for Bethel church in the past 5 years, namely, the cemetery, Ed. Building, choir, lawn, and etc."²¹ Their dedication to Bethel was greatly appreciated.

On May 5 Council met. The property committee reported that the building behind the Parish House had been torn down. Council appointed Paul Carpenter to be the Synod delegate and the LCW delegate was Mrs. Violet Caldwell. Three persons were to be confirmed this year. They were Greg Sellers, Leanne Carpenter, and Tina Bridges. On May 19 pastor Beaver reported to Council that "he could not sign the list of players [for the church softball team] since he was presented a blank piece of paper to sign." At the June 2 Council meeting the stewardship committee reported that receipts from 1973 were about the same as the current year of 1974. Council encouraged persons to "set out flowers around Educational Building." It also approved the purchase of a freezer for the parsonage. Pastor Beaver reported he had attended a trip sponsored by the Landers Chapel Senior Citizens. On July 7 Council commended Prue Carpenter and the teachers on a successful Bible School. Council discussed raising the fee

for burials in the church cemetery for outsiders. Council approved an additional amount of \$25 to the church softball team, which had complied with the rules and was to compete in the Cherryville Church League. Council asked pastor Beaver to preach Homecoming. On August 11 Council transferred \$1000 from general fund to the building fund. Homecoming experienced a "crowd real good in attendance", and all loose offering went to the building fund. Council thanked Cindy Pasour for assisting with the Youth Choir during the Homecoming service. On September 8 Council expressed appreciation to Diane Kiser who also assisted with the Youth Choir. Council planned a picnic for its next meeting. On September 29 a congregational meeting was held to discuss changing the rules and regulations governing the church cemetery. The change would require a \$150 minimum fee for non-members before they could be buried at Bethel and a fee of \$50 to be paid by non-members whose spouse is a member. After discussion Mrs. Lockie Carpenter made the motion to require \$150 for non-members and to require no fee for a non-member whose spouse is a member. The motion passed. On the same Sunday after the service Council heard Rev. Tommy K. Beaver "read his letter of resignation to accept a call to Whiteville, N. C. to establish a mission church." Council accepted his resignation which would be effective on November 15. On October 6 Vice Chairman Annie Lee Paysour read pastor Beaver's letter of resignation to the congregation. Rev. Beaver stated that "Dr. Whitticar sought him for the task to start a mission at Whiteville, N. C." Annie Lee "expressed our sorrow at our loss and offered lots of prayers and Love go with the Beaver Family as they set about establishing a new mission for Christ."²² Bethel sadly faced the rest of the year.

On October 6 Council met after the Council picnic. Council continued to assist needy families in the community. The church's need for a new lawn mower was discussed. Council agreed to receive the gift of an eternal flame from the Kiser Reunion to be placed in the church. Pastor Beaver would leave with two confirmation classes begun which he hoped would continue under another teacher. The Educational Building furniture had arrived. Council elected Frances Singleton to serve as secretary while Carolyn Kiser was absent with a back injury. Council appointed the following pulpit committee: Mrs. Elaine Kiser, Mrs. Lockie Carpenter, Johnnie Sue Brittain, Bill Carpenter, Robert Carpenter, and Wade Carpenter, Sr. On October 20 Council met to plan a farewell "Fellowship Dinner honoring 'The Beavers'" on November 10. Special invitations would be sent to neighbors in the community and the Landers Chapel Senior Citizens group. On November 3 Council met its last time with Rev. Beaver. Council appointed

Patricia Carpenter and Hub Sellers to teach the confirmation classes. Council adopted the recommended budget and finalized its insurance. Elaine Kiser volunteered to do the bulletins. Dr. Misenheimer from Synod met with Council and the pulpit committee to plan for calling a new minister. On November 10 Rev. Beaver preached his last sermon at Bethel. Council presented to the congregation the resolution for Rev. Beaver to receive an amount equal to his salary for the rest of the year, the amount of \$1006.39. After discussion the motion carried by secret ballot with 55 for and 35 against. After the service a "World Community Day and an Appreciation Dinner" was held in honor of the Beaver family. A large gathering attended including neighbors and Senior Citizens. On November 17 Council met with Rev. John Bollinger of St. Pauls, Hardin, who would serve as Vice Pastor. On December 1 Council met. It approved the purchase of a snapper lawn mower. Council received the resignation of Sue Sellers as organist with regret. On December 8 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected the following Council members: Buddy Wilson, Robert Carpenter, Wade Carpenter and Clarence Kiser. The congregation also accepted the 1975 budget which totalled \$21,337.²³ The year 1974 had brought great triumphs and sorrows.

In 1974 the general treasury showed that Bethel's members had contributed \$22,204.30. Of this amount \$20,493.25 came from envelope offering and \$1106.75 came from Sunday School offering. The total giving reflected a slight decrease of \$613.50 from the previous year. The Building Fund offering continued on a very positive manner. The regular contributions totalled \$7572. When added with Memorial Funds, interest, and other contributions, the grand total for the year was \$12,465.89. During the year the frantic pace of building the Educational Building resulted in numerous expenditures. The total expenditures for the Building Fund was \$51,038.51. When the year ended a balance of \$3239.46 was left in the Building Fund. But with more payments to be made on the loan, the congregation would need to continue to support the Building Fund. Also during 1974 Rev. Beaver baptized two adults and four children. He listed one marriage and seven funerals.²⁴

For the congregation at Bethel the ministry of Rev. Tommy K. Beaver had been a God-send. His accomplishments were many. He increased the membership, organized a Lutheran Men's group, and involved many members in church activities who had not previously participated. While Rev. Beaver was at Bethel, church attendance was high and the enthusiasm of the membership increased. Improvements were made on the inside of the church and on the church

grounds. But Rev. Beaver will be remembered most because he gave pastoral leadership and inspired lay leadership to embark upon the church's building program. When he left Bethel, he left a completed Educational Building, a building plan for the future, and an inspired membership. But Bethel would certainly miss the leadership of Rev. Tommy K. Beaver.

1 Council Minutes I, pp. 199-209.

2 Ibid., pp. 210-225. Churchbook II.

3 Council Minutes I, pp. 227-232.

4 Ibid., pp. 233-246.

5 Ibid., pp. 247-254.

6 Ibid., pp. 255-259. Churchbook II.

7 Council Minutes I, pp. 260-267.

8 Ibid., pp. 268-277.

9 Ibid., pp. 278-283. Churchbook II.

10 Council Minutes I, pp. 284-286.

11 Ibid., pp. 287-289.

12 Ibid., pp. 290. Council Minutes II, pp. 3-8.

13 Ibid., p. 9.

14 Ibid., pp. 10-14.

15 Building Fund Receipts 1972, a red composition book located at Bethel Church. S. E. Ledger titled on the inside Summary of Giving 1971-1975, located at Bethel Church. Churchbook II.

16 Council Minutes II, pp. 15-17.

17 Ibid., pp. 18-26.

18 Ibid., pp. 27-36.

19 Ledger 1971-75. Churchbook II.

20 Council Minutes II, pp. 37-39.

21 Ibid., pp. 39-46.

22 Ibid., pp. 46-56.

23 Ibid., pp. 56-64.

24 Ledger 1971-75. Churchbook II.

Chapter 10

BETHEL CHANGES DIRECTIONS

Despite the departure of Rev. Beaver the membership at Bethel knew they must look to the future. Two urgent issues concerned the congregation: the calling of a new minister and the full payment of the debt on the Educational Building. For many members the dream of a new church and the total completion of the building program should wait for more immediate concerns. For other members the immediate concerns should be disposed of as soon as possible to allow for completion of the church's goals. With varying opinions the membership went about parish work without a regular minister.

On January 5, 1975, the Church Council held its first meeting of the year. Council elected Robert Carpenter the Vice Chairman and Bill Carpenter the secretary. Council heard that the church still had the debt of \$32,563.71 on the Educational Building. The property committee reported that they had purchased a lawn mower but did not purchase a weed eater. The new Council members were appointed to committees. Council accepted the resignation of Lockie Carpenter from the Pulpit Committee and elected Elaine Kiser as its chairman. Pastor Bollinger met with us as he did throughout the time we remained without a pastor. On February 2 Council met. Oscar Kiser met with Council and discussed pledges for the building fund. Council approved the transfer of \$1000 from general fund to building fund. Elaine Kiser reported the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee to call Steve Hackney as Bethel's new pastor. After discussion Council approved calling Steve Hackney, a seminarian from Southern Seminary in Columbia. After extensive discussion Council approved recommending to the congregation the salary for Steve Hackney to be \$7800 annual salary, three weeks vacation annually, and all other existing benefits which were in the 1975 budget. The property committee also reported that the Educational Building had been exterminated for termites. Council approved exterminating the parsonage also. John Singleton discussed the final inspection of the Educational Building by the architect. Council in the ab-

sence of a pastor authorized Robert Carpenter, Annie Lee Payseur, and Bill Carpenter to complete the annual parochial report. On February 16 the congregational meeting was held. Rev. Glenn A. Yount called the meeting to order and served as the representative from Synod. The congregation voted on whether to call Steve Hackney as the new pastor. The motion was approved with 76 yes votes and only 2 no votes. Oscar Kiser reported on the building fund. Congregation adopted the building fund goal of \$15,000. Members were to complete their pledges and return by February 23. The motion was made to adopt the salary package prepared by the Council. It was approved with the notation that a continuing education allowance would be "worked out later".¹ After four months Bethel had the prospect of once again having a regular minister. Yet, Bethel would have to wait until Seminarian Hackney graduated.

On March 2 Council met. Council approved of Prue Carpenter being in charge of the Bible School and decided to have it in the mornings. The architect, Mr. Beam, had made the final inspection of the Educational Building and would make needed repairs. Council voted to spray the church for wasps. Council also approved painting the inside of the parsonage and fixing the outside gutter. On April 6 Council approved the transfer of \$1000 from general to building fund. Council provided that expenses for mowing the church property would be paid by the cemetery fund. Council elected Paul Carpenter as Synod delegate and Carolyn Kiser to be the alternate. Pastor Bollinger returned money appropriated by Council to cover his performing Lenten services at Bethel. On April 13 Council approved paying for expenses incurred when pastor Bollinger's car was burglarized while at the last Council meeting. On May 4 Council approved purchasing new choir robes. Council approved for Bethel to have a softball team under the condition that the players "attend the church of their choice at least two Sundays a month." On May 11 Council officially met Steve Hackney. Council discussed plans for an outing with him when he takes over his duties. Council delayed taking action on Hackney's suggestion that a friend named Kenny be allowed to stay in the parsonage with him. On May 25 a congregational meeting was held. The congregation approved the purchase of the choir robes and the sponsoring of the softball team. There was much discussion about the rule in the constitution which prohibits the Council from spending more than \$25 on any budgeted item. On June 1 Council approved the transfer of \$1000 from the general to the building fund. Council also authorized Buddy Wilson to buy a new lawn mower for the church. Council elected Carolyn Kiser as secretary.²

On July 6 Council approved paying pastor Bollinger \$260. Pastor Hackney met with the Council for the first time. Council agreed that the Bible School was a "great success [and] Prue Carpenter was thanked for her help as Director." The property committee reported the lawn mower had been purchased. Council approved lending "old candle sticks" to Rev. Beaver. Council discussed purchasing a public address system for the church. It appointed Frances Singleton as treasurer for the PA system. Council planned a retreat at Lake Norman. On August 3 Council met. Pastor Hackney stated that a new sign for the church was needed in the church yard. Council discussed forming a "task force" to study the church constitution. On September 7 Council passed a motion to keep old financial records and minutes in the closet in the Educational Building. Council authorized Robert Carpenter to write Synod about a mistake in the apportionment. It had increased \$1800 in one year. After reviewing three insurance bids for the church property Council approved taking insurance with North American Insurance Company for \$665.14 and appointed Buddy Wilson to be insurance chairman. On October 5 Council approved a motion to allow Rev. Beaver's mission church to have any old Sunday School material our church might have. Mrs. Claude Carpenter resigned as custodian of the church. Council gave permission for a Cub Scout Troop to meet in the Parish House and for the church to offer sponsorship of the troop "so long as they clean up and take care of the Parrish [sic] House." It was reported to Council that the PA System Fund had \$408 with a goal of \$800. Council set aside October 19 as PA System Sunday to allow for special donations from the congregation. On November 2 Council met. The property committee reported that grass seed had been planted, "graves filled and bank cut down behind" the Parish House. The PA Fund stood at \$561. The youth planned a spaghetti supper and will present "Godspell" on November 22. It was reported that a synod committee would meet and act upon the mistakes made in determining our apportionment. Council approved an increase in the custodian salary from \$250 per year to \$300. Council then adopted a budget of \$22,257 to be presented to the congregation. On November 16 Council approved a joint Thanksgiving service with Landers Chapel Methodist Church on November 26 at Landers Chapel. On December 7 Council approved Christmas Eve service for 11:00. Council appointed Fern Hall, Johnnie Sue Brittain, and C. F. Brittain to prepare Christmas treats. It planned a church Yard Sale for December 20 from 8:00 until 5:00. The committee in charge of the Yard Sale was Pastor Hackney, Mrs. John Mitchem, Joyce Wilson, Mrs. Georgie Carpenter, and Annie Lee Payseur. Any money raised would go into the PA Fund. On December 14 the

annual congregational meeting was held. Each member received a copy of the church constitution. Rev. Hackney gave his pastor's report. He emphasized Bethel's growth, its youth ministry program, its choir, and evangelism. He asked the members: "What does Bethel strive for?" and "Are we giving enough time and talents to God?" The congregation approved the budget as presented and elected the following Council members for the new year: Don Kiser, Sammy Kiser, Lester Clark, and Patricia Carpenter.³

During 1975 Bethel congregation donated \$21,034.53 to the general treasury. This total showed another decrease from last year of \$1,169.87. This year was another big year for support for the building program. The total regular receipts for the Building Fund was \$7823.90. When added to other contributions, Memorials, interest, and transfers from the general fund, the Building Fund totalled \$11,810.33. All expenditures went toward paying off the bank loan. Payments were made every month with the church paying more than the \$540.05 payment during every month but two. The congregation desperately wanted to pay off the debt. On December 31, 1975, the Building Fund balance stood at \$3280.21. No record of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, or funerals exist in the Churchbook for 1975. Apparently Rev. Hackney did not record such activity during his pastorate.⁴

On January 4, 1976, the Church Council held its first meeting of the new year. Council elected the following officers for the year: Lester Clark, Vice Chairman; Patricia Carpenter, Secretary. Representatives from the Youth, Freda Greene and Greg Sellers, attended the meeting. Council approved purchasing the public address system from Carroll's Music for \$904 plus tax. Council approved the congregational meeting to discuss the building fund pledging. On February 1 Council met. Pastor Hackney made the committee appointments for the year. The property committee reported that members had built a cabinet for the youth choir robes. It was announced that the youth planned a seminary visit and that they were continuing to present "Godspell" to area churches. Lenten services were planned "with other Lincoln County churches." On March 1 Council met and set July 25 as the date for the Lutheridge retreat. On April 1 Council set Bible School for June 7-11 from 9:00-11:00 AM. Council approved a Bicentennial retreat possibly at Kings Mountain. The property committee reported work was continuing on the church sign located in front of the church. Council approved contracting with Charles Neill to cut the grass with the cemetery fund paying the expense. Pastor Hackney reported that a nursery had been set up in the Parish House and that volunteers were needed

for it. On May 2 Council met. The treasurer reported that the bank loan balance had dropped under \$20,000 with the amount of \$19,499.28. Council set May 29 as the date for the Bethel Bazaar. Proceeds from the bazaar would go toward a speaker for the nursery and for the building fund. On June 6 the following young persons were confirmed: Mark Bridges, Chuck Deaton, Lucinda Mauney, and Linda Kiser. On June 6 Council met. The duties of each church committee was given to each chairman. The Bicentennial Worship Service was planned for July 4 at Kings Mountain Park with dinner afterwards. Council approved purchasing "a set of Bible books to begin the church library." Council elected Paul Carpenter as delegate to the Synod Convention and gave permission for Leanne Carpenter to use the church organ to practice. On August 1 Council met. Council approved that all loose offering given on the fourth Sunday in each month would go toward the Hunger Appeal. The property committee announced that August 6 would be clean-up day for the church for homecoming. Pastor Hackney reported that the balance in the Cemetery Fund was \$444.45 as reported by treasurer, Violet Kiser. Council approved allowing loose offering given at Homecoming to go into the Cemetery Fund.⁵

On September 1 Council approved two motions. The first allowed the treasurer to pay the insurance premium from the building fund if insufficient funds were available in the general fund. The second motion authorized the treasurer not to pay apportionment for the month if there were insufficient funds. Council addressed this general fund monetary crisis by suggesting that air conditioning not be left on in the church after church hours, by suggesting that a sign be made to emphasize appropriate use of the thermostat, and by asking Pastor Hackney to address the issue to the entire congregation. The stewardship committee announced that a dinner would be held in November to present the stewardship program and to hand out the pledge cards. Council appointed Leanne Carpenter as director of the "children's music K-6". Social ministry announced that Paul Carpenter had donated a new tape recorder to the church. The suggestion that a college age young married couples Sunday School class be created was made to the christian education committee. Council approved dropping the use of a lay assistant to give out the communion wafers but allowed for continued use of a lay reader. On October 1 Council approved that the benevolence apportionment be paid for the next month. October 23 was set for painting the inside of the church "antique white" and the choir room a green color. The LCW agreed to provide a meal for the painters. Council appointed a budget committee. At the November Council meeting a Thanksgiving service was

planned at Bethel with invitations going out to Antioch Lutheran and Hephzibah Presbyterian but not to Little Mountain Church. Council approved a motion "that the educational building will be used for educational purposes only, not social. A fee of \$10.00 will be charged to any non-member to [pay] the utilities of Parish house for any social activity." At the December meeting the stewardship committee recommended that \$150 be appropriated to children's activities for children below the sixth grade. It also reported that \$12,785.20 was pledged to the general fund. Council approved a Christmas Play on December 19. On December 13, 1976, the annual congregational meeting was held. Following a slight modification the congregation accepted the 1977 budget as presented. The congregation accepted the Council's nominations for the Church Council by acclamation: John Singleton, Hub Sellers, Mac Harmon, and Claude Carpenter. Oscar Kiser then presented the report on the building fund. He reported that \$7,963.58 had been given to the building fund during 1976 through November. The bank loan balance remained at \$15,232.45 and the debt to Mrs. Mitchem was \$1000. Oscar Kiser and Rev. Hackney recommended that the goal of paying off the building fund indebtedness by the end of 1978 be established. Pledge cards would be distributed to the congregation on the second Sunday in January. The meeting concluded with the pastor's annual report. The final 1976 Building Fund report indicated that \$8,792.97 had been given to the building fund during the year and that indebtedness stood at \$14,577.96 to Carolina First National Bank and \$1000 to Mrs. Mamie Mitchem.⁶

On January 2, 1977, Church Council met. The Council had previously approved the Youth to clean the church. Council at this meeting decided to pay the custodian fees directly into the youth fund in a lump sum. Council appointed Martha Carpenter and Cynthia Clark as Sunday School Treasurers with Annette Poole as their assistant. Council elected Lester Clark, Vice Chairman, and Robert Carpenter, Secretary. Council asked the Cemetery Committee to review the cemetery rules concerning burial of non-members. Council approved the goal of December 31, 1978 to pay the building fund debt. Council approved placing "an abbreviated Council meeting report" in the church bulletin. Council approved the transfer of the P. A. System account into the general fund. Fourteen persons were recognized for perfect Sunday School attendance last year. Council approved having "a Sunday of activities" instead of a Lutheridge service. On February 6 Council met. The NC Synod sent Bethel "a congratulatory letter on our outstanding record concerning complete payment of the 1976 Apportionment." Don Kiser reported that the Cemetery Committee had rewritten rules for its use.

The Council approved the recommendation. Council approved joining St. Pauls, Crouse, for a "joint outdoor Easter Sunrise Service." Lenten services were planned. Rev. Hackney reported that the youth will present its sermon given at Youth Sunday to the Youth Winter Carnival at Hickory. On February 27 the congregation approved the new regulations concerning the Bethel Cemetery. On March 6 Council met. Patricia Carpenter suggested that a nursery Sunday School class was needed and volunteered to contact others about starting a class. Council approved the repair of about 10-12 broken gravestones.⁷

On April 3 Council met. The property committee reported that the work on the tombstones was satisfactory. "Following discussion concerning whether the pastor should be present at the Church Council meetings, Robert Carpenter made a motion that the regular Council meeting shall be at 7:30 and that Pastor Hackney and the youth will arrange to have their Youth meeting so there will be no conflict thereby allowing the Pastor to attend both meetings. Wade [Carpenter Sr.] seconded the motion and it passed." Council concluded the meeting with a discussion about "a lack of church attendance". On May 1 Council accepted from the Memorial Fund and Forrest Allen the gift of a "Processional Cross in memory of Mrs. Forrest Allen Sr." Council learned that "the LCW is financially distressed." Council approved an increase in the guest pastor's salary to \$50 plus expenses per visit. Council set Vacation Bible School for June 6-10 from 9-11 AM. Hub Sellers reported that the "Young Married Couples Class is meeting in the Parish House" and that a nursery class had been established. Don Kiser made the motion, Hub Sellers seconded, and Council accepted the resignation of Lester Clark as Vice Chairman. On May 29 the following members were confirmed: Lance Sellers, Lois Pasour, and Karen Carpenter. On June 5 Council learned that "approximately \$1291.00 [was] raised through the sale of the cookbooks." This money went into the building fund. The property committee made plans to paint the Parish House inside and out. On August 21 a dedication service was planned for the gift by the Kiser Family of the Eternal Light. Council elected Patricia Carpenter, Vice Chairman. Council elected Paul Carpenter as Synod delegate. Council approved placing ushers names in the bulletin and appointed Claude Carpenter as Head Usher. On July 3 Council met. Council heard that the youth would conduct two services and Leanne Carpenter with help from the children one service while the pastor would be on vacation. The property committee reported that the women of the church will be furnishing new curtains for the Parish Hosue. Prue Carpenter reported that she planned to take the children under the sixth grade to Carowinds. Council defeated a mo-

tion to invite Rev. Tommy K. Beaver to preach at Homecoming.⁸

On August 7 Council met and discovered that the bank loan balance stood at \$10,000. Council set August 12 as "Clean-Up Day for the church" and November 5 for the Fall Festival. On September 4 Council learned that the youth would be attending Camp Daniel Boone near Canton, N. C. The christian education committee reported that there were no students in the kindergarten class. Council approved having a supper to raise money for the building fund and approved a motion made by Buddy Wilson to permit the LCW to have a project to help pay for carpet in the church. The Women of the Church had taken as a project placing carpet in the sanctuary. The evangelism committee made a list of members not actively attending and planned to visit them. On October 9 Council agreed to forgo a benevolence payment because of insufficient funds. The property committee planned to complete painting the Parish House by November 5, the date of the bazaar. Council appointed a budget committee. Patricia Carpenter submitted a list of persons not attending church, and Council members and Rev. Hackney were assigned persons to visit. On November 6 Council met. The receipts from the bazaar was \$958.85. Buddy Wilson made the motion, which carried, to pay \$1000 on the bank loan payment. Council also approved establishing a Bazaar Fund "to pay expenses for next year." Patricia Carpenter led Council in a discussion of inactive members and those who had been visited. Council added some items to the proposed budget such as \$200 for youth, \$150 for children, and adding \$100 to custodian. Bethel accepted the invitation of Antioch to attend Thanksgiving services. On December 4 Council met. Council noted that no World Hunger Appeal was held during November. "No explanation was given." Council approved December 18 for the Christmas Play, approved treats for the children and senior citizens, and approved 7:30 for the time of the Christmas Eve service. Since Christmas came on Sunday, Don Kiser made the motion that there be no Sunday School, that service begin at 10:30, and that it include a children's sermon and communion. The motion carried. Council discussed the constitution and its requirements about what constitutes an inactive member. Council planned to review the constitution next year. On December 11 the annual congregational meeting was held. Rev. Hackney gave the pastor's report which showed that Bethel's membership had increased. He emphasized the activities of the youth during the year. The congregation elected the following Church Council members: Annette Poole, Forrest Allen Jr., Jerry Porter, and Cynthia Clark. Following discussion of the church budget of \$24,567 Sammy Kiser moved, Rachel Kiser seconded, that it be accepted as is. The motion carried.⁹

On January 1, 1978, the Church Council held its first meeting of the year. Council elected John Singleton, Vice Chairman, and Annette Poole, Secretary. Other committees were assigned. On January 8 Oscar Kiser and John Singleton would conduct the building fund emphasis to the congregation. The property committee reported that Sherry Wilson will be the new custodian. Council approved the purchase of a "record-a-message" for the parsonage telephone as long as it was under \$100. On February 5 Council met. Council approved having Easter Sunrise service at Bethel this year and to invite St. Paul's, Crouse. Council approved November 4, 1978 as the date of the next bazaar. Forrest Allen made the motion, seconded by Hub Sellers, that a new committee be appointed to deal with the youth ministry. Council approved the motion. Rev. Hackney passed out copies of the constitution and members were to work on updating it by the next meeting. On March 5 Council met. Council set the Vacation Bible School dates for June 19-23 from 9-11 AM. Hub Sellers made the motion, seconded by Don Kiser, that Bethel allow Joyce Wilson to use the Parish House for a Homemakers Extension Club. A file cabinet was donated to the church at this time by an anonymous donor. On April 9 Council learned that the bank loan balance was at \$4992.44. Council also learned that expenses for last month exceeded receipts. Forrest Allen moved that Bethel cut its apportionment from \$451.75 per month to \$300 per month with the \$151.75 be allowed to accumulate to pay current expenses or to "a mission development that the Council & church may see fit to give it to." Jerry Porter seconded the motion and it passed. On May 7 Council met. Council voted not to go to Lutheridge and approved Rev. Hackney to preach Homecoming. Council discussed various changes to the constitution. Council elected Paul Carpenter to attend Synod convention. On May 14 the following confirmands joined the church: Sherry Wilson, Mark Deaton, and Scott Bridges. On May 28 the congregation approved the cut in the apportionment of the amount of \$151.75 to be used "for our current expenses as we need them."¹⁰

On June 4, 1978, Council met. No advisor had been secured for the youth ministry. Council approved that the church have an "outing" at Kings Mountain sometime in July. On July 2 Council met. Council approved July 23 as time of service at Kings Mountain and picnic afterwards. July 29 was set as clean-up day. The property committee reported that a heating contractor had been contacted about our heating system. It also reported that the hailstorm had caused damage to the church buildings, and the insurance company had been contacted. On August 6 Council learned that "approximately \$100 [was] needed

to pay off our mortgage at bank on Educational Building." Don Kiser made the motion, Patricia Carpenter seconded, that Bethel pay off the mortgage. The motion was approved. The goal of repaying the Educational Building debt by 1978 had been accomplished. The property committee presented a bid to replace the heating system in the church. It also gave the following hail damage: 50% on church, \$1535; 50% on Parish House, \$566; 100% on Educational Building \$1384; 50% on parsonage; \$300 glass damage. Forrest Allen suggested that \$3000 of the total \$4473 be placed "in escrow fund to use for roofing of the other building that were damaged as needed - not repair them now." Patricia Carpenter moved that Council approve the constitution "as it is". Don Kiser seconded it and it passed. Council also approved purchasing a record-a-message for the parsonage. "Forrest Allen requested that we elect a property Chairman to relieve him of his present duties due to health reasons by Oct. 1, 1978." During August at the congregational meeting the congregation approved installing a furnace with air conditioning and fixing the church windows at a cost of \$9,111. The congregation also approved the constitution with the changes that were recommended.

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On September 10, 1978, Council met. Council approved Forrest Allen's suggestion about placing roofing insurance money into escrow. Don Kiser made the motion that when the church borrows the money for the furnace and windows that an additional \$1000 be borrowed to pay Mrs. Mitchem for her loan for the Educational Building. Council approved the insurance bid of Citizens Insurance of \$1043 for all buildings. Forrest Allen suggested that memorials for the windows be allowed to assist in paying the cost of the renovation. He suggested that \$300 be for stained glass and \$100 for clear glass. He also suggested that plaques be placed below each window in memorial. On October 1 Council approved repayment to Mrs. Mamie Mitchem for \$1000 loan to the building fund. Council approved selling the old windows from the church to the highest bidder by November 1. Council had a "lengthy discussion on repairs to inside of church walls". Forrest Allen made the motion that Council appoint a committee to determine cost of wallpaper to cover the walls. The motion was approved and Don Kiser and Lester Clark were appointed. Council accepted the resignation of Forrest Allen as property chairman. On November 5 Council approved using \$4086 in the building fund to pay for the heating system. Mrs. Mitchem suggested that the church could use her \$1000 for another year if needed "or until we could pay her." Council approved Thanksgiving service with Antioch on November 22. Forrest Allen agreed to donate the Christmas treats. Don

Kiser reported on the estimate for the wallpaper. Council agreed to discuss with the congregation wallpaper for the church walls and siding for the Parish House. Council accepted a sealed bid of \$100 for the church windows. On December 3 Council met. Council discovered that enough money was in the building fund to pay for the windows. Pure Carpenter was authorized to pay the window bill in December. Council approved the Christmas Play for December 17 and Christmas Eve services at 7:30. The mission activity kits being prepared by the youth were ready to be sent off. On January 6 the Epiphany celebration would be held in the mall by area Lutheran youth. Council also heard estimates on the siding for the Parish House. On December 10 the annual congregational meeting was held. The pastor's report was the first item of business. Oscar Kiser made the motion, Wade Carpenter Sr. seconded, that the budget of \$24,371 be approved. The congregation approved the motion. The congregation elected the following Council members: Dennis Kiser, Mary Frances Carpenter, Iris Carpenter, and Wade Carpenter Jr. Don Kiser then presented the proposal for wallpapering the inside walls, placing paneling on the lower sides and along the choir, and painting. The total cost would be \$2107.10. Sue Sellers made the motion "that we start on this as soon as possible." Robert Carpenter seconded and it carried. Don Kiser then presented the proposal for placing aluminum siding on the Parish House. He gave three estimates. "Robert Carpenter suggested that we get more estimates with brick and then take to Council to get their recommendations before any action to be done." The congregation adjourned without taking action on siding for the Parish House.¹²

On January 7, 1979, the Church Council held its first meeting of the year. Council re-elected John Singleton as Vice Chairman and Annette Poole as Secretary. Council appointed Iris Carpenter, Violet Kiser, and Annie Lee Payseur to assist Don Kiser in selecting wallpaper for the church. On February 4 Council met and decided to dedicate the new service book and hymnal on February 11 since they had arrived. On March 4 Council met. The worship and music committee reported that an assistant was needed to help with the children's music during Sunday School. Council agreed to allow Forrest Allen to replace wood around the steeple with aluminum siding "without any charge to the church." Council also gave Iris Carpenter permission to buy paint for the back of the church and to refinish the floors. Council also discussed putting down carpet in the church and replacing the outside doors. On April 1 Council met. It approved an increase in the monthly wage paid to the persons mowing the grass to \$50 per month. Council agreed to allow the youth to use money set aside

for youth ministry to pay for any youth needing money for Lutheridge. On May 6 Council met. Council appointed Annie Lee Payseur chairman of the Vacation Bible School, which was set for June 25-29. Council appointed Leanne Carpenter "as youth delegate to the synod this year." Council also voted to go to Lutheridge for Bethel's summer outing. On June 3 Council met. Council agreed for Buddy Wilson to cut the church grounds "with church furnishing mower". The worship and music committee reported that Wendy Kiser will be helping with the children's music. Council approved the purchase of new altar cloths. On July 8 Council met. Council set July 29 as time for the summer outing to the Gaston County Park instead of Lutheridge. On August 3 Council met with only three members present. On September 2 Council met. On the same date Bethel repaid Mrs. Mamie Mitchem for the \$1000 borrowed during the drive for the Educational Building. The worship and music committee reported that choir robes and two acolyte robes were needed. Hub Sellers made the motion, seconded by Iris Carpenter, that the church buy these items "if they are needed and will be used." Rev. Hackney presented the plans for confirmation classes with Bethel being involved with area churches. Council adopted the plan. Council accepted the invitation of Antioch to attend their Thanksgiving service. On October 7 Council met. The worship and music committee determined that there was no interest in buying the small choir robes at this time. On November 4 Council met. Council appointed a budget committee to prepare the 1980 budget. Council authorized Iris and Prue Carpenter to buy a mimeograph machine being sold by Christ's Lutheran if they deem it "suitable". "John Singleton read a letter of resignation from Council [for] Cynthia Clark." "A letter of resignation of Pastor Hackney was also read. Date of resignation will be effective last day of November."¹³ Council agreed to appoint a pulpit committee at the next meeting.

On November 11 at a called Council meeting the following persons were elected to serve on the Pulpit Committee: Jerry Porter, Patricia Carpenter, Wade Carpenter Sr., Cynthia Clark, Frank and Gladys Rhyne. On December 2 Church Council met at its regular meeting. John Singleton informed Council that Rev. John Bollinger of St. Paul's, Hardin had agreed to serve as the vice pastor for Bethel. After "lengthy discussion" Council approved the 1980 budget which totalled \$25,967. Iris Carpenter made the motion that Bethel pay \$100 per month to the vice pastor on the condition that he "will tell us if he needs extra expenses." Wade Carpenter seconded the motion and it passed. Council approved for the Christmas Play to be on December 23 and for Candlelight services to be at 7:30, which would be performed by Rev. Bollinger. Council appointed Robert

Carpenter to fill the unexpired term of Cynthia Clark. On December 9 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected the following Church Council members: Carmen Bryant, Rick Carpenter, Martha Clark, and Buddy Wilson. Robert Carpenter made the motion that the budget be accepted as presented. Wade Carpenter seconded and the congregation approved the budget. Apparently sometime during 1979 or early 1980 aluminum siding was placed on the Parish House. Also during 1979 the following teenagers were confirmed: Wanda Kiser, Johnny Dellinger. Only one baptism and one marriage was recorded.¹⁴

On January 7, 1980, Church Council met for its first meeting of the year. Council committees were appointed. Council re-elected Annette Poole as Secretary and decided to ask Forrest Allen if he would serve as vice chairman. On February 3 Rev. Bollinger led the Council meeting. Council unanimously elected Forrest Allen the vice chairman. Council approved the purchase of additional Bibles to be used in Sunday School. Council also approved for the property committee to get an "estimate on repairs to parsonage and report back on what needs to be done." On March 9 Council met. The property committee gave estimates on the cost of carpet for the parsonage. Iris and Prue Carpenter volunteered to "pick out some type of carpet for the parsonage and get price on total carpeting of house." Council voted to buy paint to paint the parsonage. On April 13 Council met. Council transferred \$2000 from the general fund to the building fund. The worship and music committee reported that the paraments were being used. Council approved Prue Carpenter to chair the Vacation Bible School. The property committee reported on additional improvements to the parsonage. It reported that guttering on the front of the parsonage had been replaced. Dennis Kiser had repaired the lawnmower. Council authorized Wade Carpenter and Buddy Wilson to purchase a grass trimmer if the price did not exceed \$325. Council discussed the need for a new church sign. Iris Carpenter then reported estimates on carpeting for the parsonage. Mary Frances Carpenter made the motion, seconded by Jerry Porter, that the parsonage be carpeted at the cost of \$1042.24. The motion carried. Council then approved replacing linoleum in the parsonage kitchen and bathroom for \$8.95 per square foot. Council suggested that these projects be reported in the bulletin so some contributions can defray the expenses. The Pulpit Committee reported to Council the recommendation that Bethel call Darrell Norris, a student at Southern Seminary. Iris Carpenter moved that pastor's travel expense be increased to \$1800. Annette Poole seconded and it passed. Council then approved leaving the salary package at \$10,272 with four weeks vacation. On April 15 a called Council meeting was held to "rescind mo-

tion made in April 13 on putting carpet and linoleum in parsonage without letting the congregation vote on it." Since the constitution required congregational approval of items exceeding \$1000, the motion was rescinded as unconstitutional. Council then recommended that the congregation approve the carpet and linoleum package which would cost \$1497.06. On April 20 Rev. Robert Shelby presided over the congregational meeting to call Darrell Norris as our new pastor. Frank Rhyne, a member of the Pulpit Committee, reported on the credentials of Norris. Following discussion a secret ballot vote was taken. The results were 55 for; 15 against; 3 abstentions. Since a 2/3 approval was needed to call a pastor, Bethel did extend an official call to Darrell Norris.¹⁵

On May 11, 1980, Council met with Darrell Norris and members of the Pulpit Committee. Council approved Bible School to be June 16-20 from 9-11 AM. "Cynthia Clark read her letter of resignation as youth director." Council approved Forrest Allen as the Synod delegate. Council discussed formation of the pastoral relations committee. Darrell Norris informed Council that he would begin work at Bethel on June 16. He said he needed furniture and wanted to know "some of the Concerns of the Church." The responses he received included: "Message, Youth, Visitation of sick and elderly, Music and Choir." On June 1 Council met. The property committee reported that the carpet and linoleum work had been completed in the parsonage, that a weedeater had been purchased, and that a refrigerator and some furniture borrowed from Mrs. Coy Mauney would be used in the parsonage until some could be purchased by Norris. Council approved termite treatment which would cost \$590 in the church and \$125 in the Parish House. Council approved the motion by Buddy Wilson that no salary advances would be allowed without approval of the Council. Council selected the following to serve on the pastoral relations committee: John B. Carpenter, Carmen Bryant, Forrest Allen, and Violet Kiser. On July 6 Council met. Rev. Norris gave his first pastor's report. It was announced that Rev. Norris would be installed at Bethel on August 3. Pastor Norris volunteered to direct the youth. Council asked Rev. Norris to preach for Homecoming and invited Rev. Bollinger, Sigmund, and Shelby. Martha Clark volunteered to make a bib with a cross to give with a candle for a baptism. On August 11 Council met. Rev. Norris read a "letter from the estate of O. L. Kiser who has left \$5000 to the Bldg Fund unless no building will be built then it can be used as church sees fit." Council decided not to have a bazaar this year. Council then approved the purchase of a new washer for the parsonage. On September 7 Council met. Council approved transferring \$3000 from the general fund to a savings account of the building fund.

Rev. Norris reported that "the water system in the parsonage is bad." Council approved buying a set of Bible Encyclopedias for the Sunday School. Council approved for Frank and Gladys Rhyne to represent Bethel at a Camping Ministry Appeal meeting. On October 5 Council met. The property committee reported that signs would be placed at the ends of Long Shoals Road and that Wade Carpenter would erect a new sign in front of the church. Council approved charging non-members a fee of \$25 for use of the Parish House. On November 2 the Council met. The treasurer's report for the month indicated that the general fund had over \$9248.08 in it. Council discussed whether to place part of the money in the general fund savings account or to place it in the building fund. Council made no decision at this time. Pastor Norris announced that Bethel will host a Thanksgiving Eve service with Antioch as our guest on November 26. He also suggested that ten year olds be allowed to take "1st Communion". This suggestion brought considerable discussion but no action. The property committee noted that Buddy Wilson would get a Christmas tree for the church. Council approved "that the mothers get the nursery [for church] organized and ask for volunteers to help." On December 7 Council met. Council approved Christmas treats for children through junior high and for senior citizens. Council approved the Christmas program for December 21 and Christmas Eve services at 7:30 with communion. Council was notified that "John Singleton donated \$125.00 to pay for mimeograph machine." On December 14 the annual congregation meeting was held. After discussion Sue Sellers made the motion that the budget be accepted as proposed. Robert Carpenter seconded the motion and it passed. The following Council members were elected by the congregation: Rachel Kiser, Gail Cabaniss, Helen Reel, and Sue Sellers. During 1980 two baptisms and no marriages were recorded.¹⁶

On January 4, 1981, the Church Council met for the year. New committees were elected. Council also elected Sue Sellers as vice chairman and Gail Cabaniss as secretary. Prue Carpenter was re-elected as the church treasurer. On February 1 Council met. Pastor Norris reported that Bethel had 176 baptized members at the end of 1980, that Bethel gained five new members since the first of 1981. Council approved buying a refrigerator for the parsonage. Pastor Norris reported that he had received a check for \$5000 from the family of Oscar Kiser. The youth planned to have a supper on February 28. On March 9 Council met. Council adopted the Camping Ministry Appeal goal of \$4,644 for our church, which was the challenge goal. Frank Rhyne was appointed to present a filmstrip to the congregation. Council approved spending \$800 to purchase a water filter

system to clear up the church's water. On April 5 Council met. Council approved Easter Sunrise service at 6:30 with coffee and doughnuts and an 11:00 service with communion. On May 10 Council met. It was announced that Forrest Allen had donated new offering plates in memory of Inez Dellinger. Pastor Norris noted that eight young people would be confirmed on June 7. He planned a covered dish dinner in their honor after the service. Council approved the purchase of a file cabinet to hold music. Council also voted to ask Rev. Robert Shelby to deliver the Homecoming sermon. If he cannot come, then Rev. Bruce Sigmon would be asked. Council also approved the fourth Sunday for the World Hunger Appeal. On June 7 Council met. Council approved paying \$50 for each student who planned to attend Lutheridge and that this practice be continued. On July 5 Council met. Pastor Norris reported that a home had been purchased in Gaston County for juvenile youth. Council agreed to inform the congregation of the "Emergency Shelter Care Home" and ask for their financial support. Council discussed who would "take care of locking & unlocking church building." Iris Carpenter agreed to do it until "other arrangements could be made."¹⁷

On August 9 Council met. Council appointed Rachel Kiser to the board of directors of the first Lutheran Group Home. The pastoral relations committee had met and Forrest Allen would give a report to Council at the next meeting. Jack and Mary Frances Carpenter agreed to "be responsible for opening & closing Church and if they are unable John & Iris Carpenter would see to it." On September 6 Council met. Council approved Rev. Norris to replace the wall paper in the back bedroom in the parsonage with paint. Council also approved the purchase of a fire screen for the parsonage. On October 4 Council met. Council asked Wade Carpenter to study the roof of the parsonage to see if a new one is needed. Council officially decided to establish the beginning of Sunday School at 9:45. On November 8 Council met. After consideration from last meeting Council decided to allow \$8000 to remain in the checking account instead of transferring it to a savings account. The worship and music committee suggested that Diane Carpenter be asked to serve as director of the choir, and she accepted. Pastor Norris indicated that he was working on a Christmas program and Council approved the Christmas Eve service for 7:30. On December 6 Council met. Council approved the budget to be submitted to the congregation. Council also approved the election at the congregational meeting of someone to fill the unexpired term of Rick Carpenter. On December 13 the annual congregational meeting was held. Hal Carpenter made the motion to accept the budget as presented and the congregation approved the budget. The congregation elected the

following persons to serve on Council: Elaine Kiser, Frank Rhyne, John Singleton, John E. Carpenter, and Robert Carpenter.¹⁸

On January 10, 1982, the Church Council met for its first meeting of the year. The Council approved transferring \$2500 from the building fund checking account into a 30 month certificate of deposit bearing 12% interest. Council elected the following officers: John Singleton, vice chairman; Elaine Kiser, secretary; Prue Carpenter, treasurer. Council members were appointed to church committees, and Council discussed the "Time and Talent sheets" which had been prepared by the pastor and filled out by the church members. On February 7 Council met. Council discussed the need to repair the furnace in the church to allow heat into the back of the church. Council appointed a committee to study the time and talent sheets and report back to the Council. Council approved the following members of the pastoral relations committee: Carmen Bryant, Violet Kiser, Forrest Allen, and John B. Carpenter. On March 7 Council met. Pastor Norris suggested that the church purchase a copier for church use. Council requested that the property committee review the needs of the church. Council voted to reimburse Paul Carpenter for his purchase of a tape recorder. On April 4 Council met. Council approved Annie Lee Payseur to buy a new communion set in memory of Earl Payseur. Council approved for each confirmand to receive a Bible. The confirmands were Bryan Wilson, Kent Harmon, Kurt Harmon, Robbie Rudisill, Amy Carpenter, Vickie Kiser, Gary Kiser, and Eric Carpenter. Sue Sellers gave her resignation as church organist. Council agreed to recognize her service to the church. Diane Carpenter and Iris Carpenter would alternate as church organists in the future. Council agreed for Vacation Bible School to be held from June 21 to 25 from 9-11 with Patricia Carpenter as director. The property committee recommended to Council that the church not purchase a copier at this time.¹⁹

On May 2 Council met. Council approved a motion that if any member designate money for the group home that it be given "in addition to money budgeted for Home." On May 9 at a called Council meeting Rev. Darrell Norris submitted his resignation. It would be effective July 4. Council accepted his resignation. On June 6 Council held its regular meeting. It was noted that the funds for the camping appeal were behind the pledged amount. Council discussed a number of persons to be placed on the pulpit committee. Council asked Robert Carpenter to contact Paul Moretz about filling the vacancy of John E. Carpenter on the Council. Council recommended that Rev. John Bollinger once again be our vice pastor while we are without a regular minister. On June 27 at a called

congregational meeting the congregation approved the purchase of a new riding lawnmower for \$1025. On June 29 the Council met with Bishop Ernest Misenheimer concerning the call committee. The pulpit committee was composed of Iris Carpenter, Prue Carpenter, Hugh and Libby Carpenter, and Forrest Allen, who was named chairman. On July 11 Council met. It was announced that Paul Moretz would accept appointment to the Church Council. The youth ministry committee reported that a youth advisor was needed. On August 8 Council met. Forrest Allen, chairman of the pulpit committee, reported to council that the committee recommended calling Rev. Charles E. Leavitt. Council approved calling Rev. Leavitt to Bethel and "that a job description be formulated to go with call." Council adopted the following salary proposal: \$13,000, salary; \$1500, utilities; \$2100, car allowance; \$2197, pension; \$60, death benefit; \$200, continuing education; \$897, health benefits. Council also approved \$900 for the pastor's moving expenses. On August 11 Council held a called meeting. Council discussed the pastor's job description and decided to offer three weeks vacation with the salary package. The property committee reported that the insurance company was going to cover to some extent the recent theft from the church. Council approved purchasing a film strip projector for a cost of \$113 which belonged to Antioch and which had been stolen. The christian education committee reported that Sue Carpenter and Janice Kiser planned to organize a nursery Sunday School class. Buddy Wilson volunteered to paint the bedroom in the parsonage. Council approved a \$50 donation to the Agriculture Center Volunteer Fire Department to be a yearly budget item. Joyce Wilson agreed to become the new youth leader. On August 15 another brief meeting of the Council was held to discuss the letter to accompany the call. It was approved. Council agreed to accept the insurance settlement for the theft. On August 22 the congregational meeting was held to discuss extending the call to Rev. Charles Leavitt. "After secret vote, the majority of voting members present, voted to extend call." The financial package was approved as presented. On August 29 Council met to hear a "Letter from Charles Leavitt read accepting our call." His ministry would begin on September 12. John Singleton resigned as vice chairman of the Church Council and Council accepted his resignation. Council continued its discussion of the church constitution.²⁰

On September 13, 1982, Council met with Rev. Leavitt present. John Singleton "agreed to continue serving as Vice Chairman for the remainder of 1982." Council considered bids for the public address system which had been stolen. Pastor Leavitt noted that "a \$2,000 furniture allowance was agreed upon" with the call.

It was placed in the minutes. Council approved spending \$200 on a typewriter and to establish a \$50 "petty cash account". In the October meeting Council discussed purchasing the items stolen. Council approved immediate purchase of the film strip projector and the 16 millimeter projector. Council outlined plans to store the new equipment in a closet so a double lock for security could be maintained. Council approved the three year confirmation plan: 7th grade, one full year; 8th grade, one full year; 9th grade, retreat and summary with confirmation on Pentecost Sunday. Council approved that the PA system be set up on trial basis by Carroll's Music with a \$1000 cost estimate. Council learned that Claude Carpenter resigned as head usher. The pastoral relations committee was appointed: John Singleton, Carmen Bryant, Violet Kiser, Forrest Allen, and John B. Carpenter. On November 7 Council met. Council approved the purchase of the PA system. Keith Harmon drew a picture of the church which will be placed on the church letterhead. Other items purchased from the theft included the filmstrip projector, 16 mm film projector, stereo, and the slide projector. Council approved of Wade Carpenter Jr. as head usher. It was announced that Bethel would host the Thanksgiving service with Antioch. Council approved the purchase of a fireplace insert for the parsonage for \$500. On December 5 Council met. Council approved the budget as submitted from the finance committee. On December 12 the annual congregational meeting was held. Frank Rhyne submitted his resignation from the Council. The congregation approved the following persons to serve a full term on the Church Council: Hugh Carpenter, Jerry Porter, Sammy Kiser, Wade Carpenter Sr. To fill two unexpired terms of two years each, the congregation elected Elaine Kiser and Frank Carpenter. The congregation approved the budget as submitted. Time and talent sheets were passed out to the members, and the Willie M Home was discussed.²¹

As the year 1982 ended Rev. Charles Leavitt began to learn more about Bethel and its members. During the past seven years Bethel had paid off the Educational Building debt, had improved the church grounds, had placed siding on the Parish House and had completely remodeled the inside of the church sanctuary. Also during these years the building program stalled. No record of a decision to delay the building program can be found. But the program, so carefully planned during the tenure of Rev. Beaver, seemed to take a back seat. The records do reveal that financial difficulties did arise during this period. As Rev. Leavitt assumed pastoral leadership of Bethel, it was uncertain the direction Bethel congregation may take.

1 Council Minutes II, pp. 65-69.

2 Ibid., pp. 69-75.

3 Ibid., pp. 75-88.

4 Ledger 1971-75. Churchbook II. Some notations do appear for later years in similar handwriting which suggests that a member made the notations after the fact.

5 Council Minutes II, pp. 88-99. Churchbook II.

6 Ibid., pp. 99-107. "1976 Building Fund Report" - loose paper in Council Minutes II.

7 Council Minutes II, pp. 107-111.

8 Ibid., pp. 112-117. Churchbook II.

9 Council Minutes II, pp. 118-127.

10 Ibid., pp. 126-134.

11 Ibid., pp. 135-138.

12 Ibid., pp. 139-145.

13 Ibid., pp. 146-157.

14 Ibid., pp. 157-159. Recollections of the author. No official record reveals when the siding was placed on the Parish House. Churchbook II.

15 Council Minutes II, pp. 160-165.

16 Ibid., pp. 165-177. Churchbook II.

17 Council Minutes II, pp. 177-183. The eight confirmands were not listed.

18 Ibid., pp. 184-187.

19 Ibid., pp. 187-194.

20 Ibid., pp. 195-203.

21 Ibid., pp. 196-212.

Chapter 11

REV. LEAVITT AND THE "NEW CHURCH"

With the arrival of Rev. Charles E. Leavitt Bethel Church congregation considered what the future might hold. Members were concerned with expanding its ministry. Members were also concerned about whether the "new church" would ever become a reality. Other members felt that it was time to purchase a new organ for the church to improve the worship service. The challenges for the congregation and Rev. Leavitt were clearly evident. How these challenges would be addressed would shape the future of the church for generations to come. So Bethel congregation faced these challenges in 1983.

On January 2, 1983, the Church Council held its first meeting of the year. Council elected Robert Carpenter to the position of vice chairman and Elaine Kiser as the Council secretary. Council re-elected Prue Carpenter as the treasurer and financial secretary. The worship and music committee recommended that Bethel contract with a private florist to furnish the altar flowers. Council approved recommendation by requesting that Cherryville Florist deliver flowers for \$15 per Sunday. Council made its annual committee appointments. It elected Violet Kiser as synod delegate and Annie Lee Payseur as the alternate. On February 6 Council met. Council approved transferring \$1500 from the building fund checking account to the passbook savings account. Council approved of the cemetery fund report of Violet Kiser which showed that it had a balance of \$1151.43 as of December 31, 1982. On March 6 Council met. Council approved the purchase of a cap to be placed on the parsonage chimney. Council approved for a Sunday School superintendent to be appointed and authorized the christian education committee to write up a job description for that person. Council approved giving the pastor the authority to "give grape juice to people allergic to alcohol."¹

On April 10 Council met. Council approved purchasing a refrigerator for the Parish House for \$322.35. The property committee also reported that it was getting an estimate from Mike Wyont on tombstone repairs and cleaning. Rachel

Kiser, chairperson for the Parish House committee, reported on the needs for the Parish House. After her report Council approved spending \$150 to purchase silverware and approved contracting an electrician to inspect the church and Parish House. The pastoral relations committee reported that it had met and had elected Greg Sellers as its chairman. Council at this meeting also adopted a different format for the Council minutes. It agreed for the secretary to type the minutes, present each Council member with a copy, and keep the minutes in a loose leaf notebook. On May 1 Council met. Rev. Leavitt reported to Council that the love offering for Mr. and Mrs. Herman Kreiger following the death of their grandson totaled \$168.25. Council approved straightening the tombstones but did not want the old stones cleaned as they may deteriorate too much. Council also approved the rules for the sexton. Council approved of the appointment of Patricia Carpenter as the Sunday School superintendent and also approved of her job description. Council approved of Bible School for the week of June 13. Patricia Carpenter and Becky Leavitt were appointed directors. The fellowship committee reported that they planned a tea for Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Kiser. Council approved the purchase of a tape recording system which can be used for the shut-in ministry. After pastor Leavitt does further investigation, it will be presented to the congregation. On June 5 Council met. The property committee reported that Forrest Allen planned to donate vents for the parsonage which had been recommended in a recent heat audit. Council rejected a request by Bob Rogers representing Southern Bell for the church to sell a "small track [sic] of land behind church for purpose of sub station." Council approved of the purchase of 15 youth choir robes since 12 youth members had agreed to participate in the choir. On June 12 a called congregational meeting was held to discuss the purchase of the tape recording equipment for the shut-in ministry. Pastor Leavitt presented the following proposal: duplicator, \$1350; recorder, \$150; four players, \$160; 20 tapes, \$52; demagnetizer, \$25; cleaner, \$2; cabinet for storage, \$200; for a total of \$1942. Following discussion a motion to vote by secret ballot was defeated. The congregation then approved of the total proposal as presented.²

On July 3 Church Council met. The cemetery treasurer's report showed a balance of \$2,058.43. Council approved a motion that if Pastor Leavitt had to be recalled from vacation that the church would pay round trip expenses. Council approved the purchase of confirmation capes, which could be re-used, and Bibles for each confirmand. On July 31 Council approved the following confirmands: Amanda Bridges, Marcella Carpenter, Jody Kiser, Kim Harmon, Martha Mauney, Marla

Mauney, and Kim Poole. On August 8 Council met and adopted the job description of the Sunday School superintendent. On September 6 Council learned that a water seepage problem existed in the basement of the parsonage. The christian education committee recommended that the Sunday School continue using the Cook materials for another year. Council approved the purchase of "one or two small record players" to be used in Sunday School. Council approved increasing the salary of the sexton from \$50 to \$75 per month with the added duties as adopted previously. On October 2 Council met. At this meeting Council spent much time on the budget as proposed by the finance committee. Council proposed \$4500 as the apportionment and \$600 for youth activities. The total of the budget was \$40,221. The pastoral relations committee suggested that Council look into setting goals and objectives for the church. On October 9 Council met to consider the results of the electrician's inspection. Jerry Porter made the motion that the bid of \$741 be accepted in order to bring both the church and Parish House up to standards prepared by the insurance company. The motion passed. On November 7 Council met. The property committee reported that the electrical work had been completed and that siding and drains on the Parish House had been repaired. The fellowship committee reported successful teas which it had sponsored for Forrest Dellinger, Epsie Kiser, and Ed Harmon. It also had finalized plans for the "ole time religion Sunday" to be held on the second Sunday in November. The worship and music committee reported a meeting with Mr. Toole of Case Brothers concerning installation of an organ for the church. The estimated cost would be \$15,000 for a computer organ and \$600 for installation. After Rev. Leavitt offered some alternatives the Council approved a motion to authorize the worship and music committee with the organists, the pastor, and vice chairman to bring back a recommendation to the Council. It was announced that the youth group would present "Greatest Christmas Pageant Ever" for the Christmas Play. On December 4 Council met. The property committee discussed the continuing water problem in the parsonage basement. The worship and music presented the proposal that the following items were needed: two candlesticks, two lighters, and one advent wreath stand. Council approved that memorial money could be used for these purchases. On December 11 the annual congregational meeting was held. After presentation of the budget Frank Rhyne made the motion, seconded by Hal Carpenter, that the Group Home be eliminated from the budget. After discussion the motion failed. Sue Sellers made the motion that the 1984 budget of \$40,341 be adopted as presented. It was seconded and passed. The congregation approved of Lucille Mauney serving a two year term on Council

which had belonged to Wade Carpenter Sr. The congregation then elected the following new Council members: Darrell Carpenter, Violet Kiser, Marinsa Kreiger, and Carolyn Kiser.³

On January 8, 1984, the Church Council held its first meeting of the year. Council elected the following officers: Robert Carpenter, vice chairman; Prue Carpenter, financial secretary and treasurer; Elaine Kiser, secretary. The special organ committee was appointed: Iris Carpenter, Diane K. Carpenter, Libby Carpenter, Helen Reel, Forrest Allen. The pastoral relations committee was to include Robert Carpenter, Wendy Kiser, Greg Sellers, Martha Clark, and Rev. Leavitt. The church committees were appointed. On February 5 Council met. Council appointed Lockie Carpenter as synod delegate. The property committee recommended to Council that it accept the bid of \$2,615 for water-proofing the parsonage basement. Council approved the bid. On the organ committee Lester Clark replaced Forrest Allen, and Iris Carpenter was elected its chairman. Council also approved considering the purchase of a copy machine. On March 4 Council met. The christian education committee reported that a nursery during church had been established on a temporary basis. Council approved a motion that Bethel lease a copy machine with option to buy later. Lucille Mauney made the motion to purchase two new candle lighters from miscellaneous memorial funds which passed. On March 11 a congregational meeting was held to discuss water-proofing the parsonage basement. Darrell Carpenter made the motion that the bid of \$2915 minus \$300 discount to the church be accepted for the work. It was seconded and passed.⁴

On April 2 Council met. The christian education committee discussed the need for new drapes in the educational building. Council considered the quote of \$1293 to be more than Council could accept at this time. Rev. Leavitt stated that he would put information about this matter in "the Rock", the newly established monthly church newsletter. Council approved White Brothers to deliver a copier on a 45 day trial with an option to purchase. Carolyn Kiser made the motion that a love offering be taken on Palm Sunday to the LCA. The motion was approved. On May 6 Council met. Council approved the purchase of Bibles for Sunday School and approved June 6-10 for Vacation Bible School from 7-8:45. Rev. Leavitt reported successful Holy Week services with average attendance of over 50. Lucille Mauney made the motion to purchase the Minolta Copy machine for \$2320. Council passed the motion, and Council approved for the funds to come from the general fund money market account. On June 3 Council met. The property committee reported that the present insurance coverage was as follows:

\$127,000 church; \$7000 church contents; \$175,000 educational building; \$7000 educational building contents; \$28,000 Parish House; \$7000 Parish House contents; \$55,000 parsonage. The fellowship committee reported that a tea was planned for Mamie Mitchem, Paul Carpenter, Mozelle Costner, Howard and Zelia Carpenter. Council approved for the pastor to purchase photocopier supplies. On July 1 Council met. The property committee reported that general repairs at the parsonage would begin on July 2 and last about a week. Council learned that the youth would begin work during the summer on the planned cemetery census project. Council approved for an advent wreath to be purchased with memorial monies. Rev. Leavitt discussed whether Bethel should be incorporated. Elaine Kiser made the motion that Rev. Leavitt contact synod attorney to determine cost of incorporation. It passed.
5

On August 5 Council met. The property committee reported that the picket fence had been placed around the gas tank and garbage cans. It also noted that a special committee would make recommendations concerning insurance coverage. The balance in the cemetery fund was listed as \$1824.03. On September 9 Bethel would host the senior citizens area meeting with Marinsa Kreiger being the contact person. Council decided against incorporation at this time. On September 9 Council met. The organ committee and the worship and music committee recommended to Council that Bethel purchase the Allen Organ 2000 for \$16,844.22 plus \$1,550 for the card computer system. After discussion Jerry Porter made the motion that it be presented to the congregation. Council approved the motion. Three options for payment was discussed which included the establishment of an organ fund. On September 30 a called congregational meeting was held to consider purchase of the organ. The proposal was discussed, and John Singleton suggested that the payment plan be to withdraw \$5,800 down payment from the certificate of the general fund and to borrow \$11,000 from the certificate that the church holds. The church would then be responsible for paying itself back for purchase of the organ. "Following much discussion and the receiving of verbal pledges from the congregation, Jerry Porter made the motion that the Allen Organ 2000 be purchased." The motion passed, and a motion for a secret ballot was defeated. The Wade Carpenter family made a commitment to purchase the computer card system from the Wade Carpenter Sr. Memorial Fund. During the meeting cash donations of \$3000 were made and pledges of \$320 per month were received. On September 30 the congregation approved the new insurance policy which totalled \$1065.
6

On October 14 Council met. Council approved of moving the old organ into the ladies lounge in the educational building. The worship and music committee reported that 15 new hymnals had been ordered. Council accepted Keith and Wendy Millwood as co-directors of the junior choir. Confirmands were Amy Chapman, Tammy McGraw, Stacey Wilson, and Kelly Porter. Rev. Leavitt presented the following new adults members: Sue Carpenter, Keith Millwood, Cindy Dellinger, Mackey Stamey, and Lori Eudy. Council accepted the Christmas program which would include the senior choir, junior choir and children. Council also accepted two Christmas Eve candlelight services at 7:30 and at 11:00. On November 4 Council met. The joint Thanksgiving Service with Antioch would be at Bethel. Following the suggestion of Jerry Porter a van committee was appointed to consider the purchase of a church van. On December 2 Council met. The finance committee recommended the budget. Sammy Kiser made the motion that the benevolence be increased to \$5000. It carried. Other changes were approved by Council. Council received the gift of a pouring pitcher for Communion. On December 9 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected the following Church Council members: Wade Carpenter Jr., Curtis Neal, Hubert Sellers, and Susan Stamey. The congregation accepted the 1985 budget as presented. Sidney Carpenter made the motion that Bethel take up an offering after the Christmas program which would go to the "Empty Stocking Fund". It was seconded and passed.⁷

On January 6, 1985, the Church Council held its first meeting of the year. Council elected the following new officers: Hub Sellers, vice chairman; Prue Carpenter, treasurer and financial secretary; Susan Stamey, secretary. Chairmen for the various committees were appointed. Council discussed a new committee, the committee of the future, whose purpose would be to make "projections for the spiritual growth in all areas" for Bethel. Council approved establishing the last Sunday in each month for a love offering for World Hunger. On February 3 Council met. Frank Rhyne accepted appointment as head usher. The third Sunday in each month would again serve as committee meeting night. On March 4 Council met. Council changed World Hunger Sunday to the first Sunday. The fellowship committee reported that it planned to serve doughnuts after Easter sunrise service and planned a congregational outing for June 23 at Kings Mountain Battleground. Council approved of Vacation Bible School for August 5-9 from 6:15-8:30. On April 8 Council met. Rev. Bollinger met with Council to set up the fund drive for the North Carolina Homes. The basic goal would result in \$3120 for 30 months and the challenge goal would be \$3900 for the same period. A

congregational meeting was planned for April 28 but was not held because a quorum was not present. On May 5 Council met. The worship and music committee reported intentions of establishing a nursery during church services. It also recommended an early service during the summer months which the Council approved. The fellowship committee reported that it sponsored teas for the following church members: Eunice Kiser, Ora Carpenter, and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Moretz. Council approved of a beach trip by the youth. Council approved for the committee of the future to consider needed changes in the constitution. Council approved of individual contributions toward the Lutheran Homes fund drive since previous attempts to have a congregational meeting had failed for lack of a quorum.⁸

On June 2 Council met. The fellowship committee changed the date of the congregational outing to the second Sunday in October because of conflicts with the pastor's vacation. The report of the cemetery fund listed a balance of \$2522.34 as of July 9, 1985. On August 4 Council met. The christian education committee reported that Vacation Bible School was a great success with average attendance being 42 per night. On September 8 Council met. Council approved of Rhyne's Florist being in charge of placing flowers on the altar. On October 6 Council met. Council approved a Christmas Cantata which had been recommended by the worship and music committee. Council approved allowing Cherry Lane, Cherryville, to plant shrubs around church buildings and parsonage. Council approved of a constitutional change which would change the quorum at a congregational meeting from 40% present to "those members present". Council planned a congregational meeting for November 10. The meeting was held and the change passed 50-1. On November 3 Council met. Council approved the purchase of additional folding tables and two leaf blowers. The budget presented by the finance committee was approved. On December 1 Council met. Council approved of the donation by Forrest Allen to purchase the Christmas treats. Prue and Iris Carpenter would make up the treats. Council approved of creating a non-participating roll for members who are not active in the church. On December 8 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation elected the following as new Church Council members: Loy Carpenter, Sidney Carpenter, Beth Auten, and Wendy Millwood. The congregation approved of the 1986 budget which totalled \$47,565. The budget included 75% of our apportionment which was an increase from the 67% paid in 1985. The budget did not include the Organ Fund which was paid by pledges.⁹

On January 5, 1986, Council held its first meeting of the year. Council elected the following officers: Hub Sellers, vice chairman; Prue Carpenter,

treasurer and financial secretary; Susan Stamey, secretary. Chairmen were appointed to the standing committees. On February 2 Council met. Council approved a motion "to pay ourselves back the \$8105.00 used to purchase the organ." Members would continue to contribute to the organ fund. Council approved of a pulpit exchange during Lent. On March 4 Council met. Council approved holding Holy Week services at Pisgah Methodist Church as part of community services among other churches. Council approved contracting with Odus Killian to paint the inside of the parsonage. Council accepted the resignation of Marinsa Kreiger from Council for health reasons. Council approved contracting with Ernest Davis to cut the grass around the church and educational building for \$60 per week. Council approved the purchase of a service contract on the church copier. On April 6 Council met. The property committee reported on needs in the parsonage which required their getting some estimates. Council appointed Annie Lee Payseur to fill the unexpired term of Marinsa Kreiger. Council asked the youth to design needed church road signs. Council also reiterated that the youth may sit in on Council meetings.¹⁰

On May 4 Council met. The worship and music committee recommended that church begin during the summer months at 9 AM and Sunday School at 10 AM. Council accepted the recommendation. Council accepted a new service agreement on the copier at a cost of \$540 yearly. On August 3 Council met. The average attendance during Vacation Bible School was 61. Rev. Leavitt planned his catechism retreat on August 5-7. The balance in the cemetery fund was \$2004.54. On September 7 Council met. Council approved for memorial fund monies to be used to purchase a new piano for the church. Council approved for the "Advisory Board for the new church bldg to take plans before the congregation" during various meetings held to receive input as to the direction the congregation wanted to go. These meetings would be held during October. On October 5 Council met. Council approved a motion to "install new line from the well to the Parrish [sic] House" because it was leaking again. The fellowship committee recommended a "pounding" for Greg Huffstetler because he lost his mobile home to fire. On November 2 Council met. The fellowship committee planned a tea for November 16 in honor of Rev. and Mrs. Leavitt. The Thanksgiving service was planned for November 26 with Antioch as our guest. After hearing input from church members at the "cottage meetings" the Council recommended "to the congregation to build a new church." Council planned to have the congregation consider the proposal at a January congregational meeting. On December 7 Council met. Forrest Allen planned to again donate money for Christmas treats. The

worship and music committee expressed appreciation to Annie Lee Payseur and Violet Kiser for directing the poinsettia purchase and to Beth Auten and Susan Stamey for directing the Christmas play. Council approved the proposed budget of the finance committee. The congregational meeting met on the second Sunday in December. The congregation elected the following Council members: Lucille Mauney, Jack Carpenter, Buddy Wilson, and Robert Carpenter. The budget was approved.¹¹

On January 4, 1987, Church Council met for its first meeting of the year. Council elected the following officers: Robert Carpenter, vice chairman; Susan Stamey, secretary; Prue Carpenter, treasurer and financial secretary. Committee chairmen were appointed. On January a congregational meeting was held to discuss Council's recommendation of building a new church. There was much discussion at the meeting. Most discussion centered upon what amount of money it would take to remodel the current church. There was much concern about the present structure if a new church was built. The concensus was that the old church should be preserved. The congregation charged the Council to come back to the congregation with an estimated cost to remodel the old church so that a decision about building a new church could be made. On March 1 Council met. Council appointed a committee to determine the cost of remodeling the old church. It consisted of Robert Carpenter, Beth Auten, Wade Carpenter, Sidney Carpenter, and Buddy Wilson. Robert Carpenter reported that the Gaston County Historic Properties Commission, of which Robert is a member, was in the process of declaring Bethel Church an historic site. The process would take several months. On June 7 Council met. Council approved Vacation Bible School for July 20-24. Council approved a motion for "Prue to write an article for the Rock about our financial situation." The financial situation was that there had been more expenditures than receipts for the past few months, and Prue had difficulty in paying bills. Council approved a love offering for St. Pauls, Hardin, which had been destroyed by fire and approved \$150 to be added to the love offering from the treasury.¹²

On July 12 Council met. Bible School would be held together with Landers Chapel Methodist Church at Landers Chapel Church. Council approved a motion to get an estimate from Howard's Construction on remodeling the old church. The property committee reported that the air conditioner in the parsonage needed repair and that they would supervise the painting of the Parish House. It was reported that the church library had been completed. On August 2 Council met. Council approved of a motion "to dissolve the basement fund as 'paid in full'." Memorial funds purchased an Everett piano for \$2300. The average attendance

at Bible School was 80 each night. On October 4 Council met. Council approved of the "One in Mission" program without pledging a specific amount. The evangelism committee suggested that a worship service on Sunday night be planned in an effort to reach the unchurched. The worship and music committee reported that a nursery was being started during the service. It scheduled the Christmas program for December 20 and Christmas Eve Service for 9:00. It also recommended that Communion be held the first and third Sundays. Old Time Religion Sunday was scheduled for October 18. Council adopted the mission statement for the church as it was circulated. Rev. Leavitt recommended that a younger youth group for 5th, 6th, and 7th graders be planned. Council approved his recommendation. Council accepted the resignation of Susan Stamey from Council and approved Hal Carpenter to fill the unexpired term. On November 1 Council met. "The motion was made and passed that the Organ Fund dept [sic] be forgiven as of December 31, 1987." The debt on the organ was for money owed against a certificate of deposit which the church owned. The property committee reported that at least two estimates would be received for the remodeling of the church. Howard Construction gave an estimate of \$26,000 which would include repair of broken bricks, re-roofing the church, replacing wallpaper, and placing new molding against ceiling edges. After receiving the information and some discussion the meeting was recessed until December 27. On December 27 a congregational meeting was held. In the first item of business Bethel voted to join the ELCA as part of the North Carolina Synod. The Mission Statement for Bethel was unanimously approved. The congregation voted to set aside one Sunday a month as One in Mission Sunday when a special offering could be taken up. The fourth item of business involved "the discussion of our worship space." After a review of past meetings an estimate on remodeling the present church given by Vincent Construction Company in Dallas was discussed. "After much discussion concerning remodeling, building and financing, a motion was made that a vote be taken to (1) Remodel Church, (2) Do nothing at the present time, (3) Build a new church." The motion passed. The vote was by secret ballot and the results were as follows: 9 to do nothing; 10 to remodel the present structure; 31 to build a new church.¹³

On January 1, 1988, the first Church Council meeting was held for the new year. The Council elected Robert Carpenter as vice chairman, Wendy Millwood as secretary, and Prue Carpenter as treasurer. Greg Huffstetler made the motion "to pay the Organ Fund in full and a second was made by Bruce Kiser." The

motion passed. Committee chairmen were appointed. Council agreed that, instead of having committee meeting nights on the third Sundays, each committee chairman would call their own meetings and contact their own committee members. In other action Beth Auten agreed for the Christian education committee to consider establishing a nursery during church; Council approved the ELCA pension plan; Council agreed for the stewardship and finance committees to work together to formulate plans for the new church; and a One-In-Mission offering was established for the third Sunday in each month. On February 7 Council met. The stewardship-finance committee reported that in order to raise the money for the new church they recommended appointing a building committee, delaying pledging until the plans were approved, and starting a building fund drive. They were receptive to selling bonds for the new church and suggested that the church bring its building fund giving up to \$1500 per month. The Council took action by nominating the following persons to the building committee: Hal Carpenter, John Carpenter Sr., Chris Poole, Patricia Carpenter, Brenda Carpenter, Hub Sellers, Elaine Kiser, Dennis Kiser, Carol Porter, Wade Carpenter Jr., Lucille Mauney, Lester Clark, and Violet Kiser. The Council also recommended these guidelines for the building committee: "get input from congregation for likes and dislikes," find and look at other church plans, "give a monthly report to the council", and "visit different churches for pro and cons of church design." In other business Council elected Elaine Kiser the secretary/treasurer for the "Supporting Christians", which was a group of area churches banded together to help persons in need. The worship and music committee reported that Lenten services were scheduled for 7:30 PM and that Bethel hosted the Holy Week services with other area churches. Council elected Lester and Martha Clark as delegates to attend the Synod meeting.¹⁴

On March 6 Council met. The worship and music committee recommended that September 11 be the date for the Lutheridge service. On May 8 Council met. Wade Carpenter Jr., chairman of the building committee, reported to Council that a questionnaire had been formulated for each member to receive input. He announced that "Cottage Meetings" would be held on May 15 and May 22 to discuss new church plans with the members. Council approved of a family outing at South Fork Park on May 29 for 10:00. There would be no Sunday School, and a cookout would be after the service. Council approved of Vacation Bible School being held during the third week in July again with Landers Chapel. A youth retreat was planned for June 18-19. Council approved the following summer schedule: 9:15 Sunday School; 10:30 worship. Council approved a donation to

Landers Chapel Missionary Baptist Church of \$100. On June 12 Council met. Council expressed "concern" about few members attending the "Cottage Meetings". July 16 was set as clean-up day for the church, educational building, and Parish House. On July 10 Council met. The property committee reported that the parsonage needed a new roof, needed either siding or painting on the outside, and needed bricks replaced around the steps. Council asked the property committee to get estimates for the work. The building committee reported that it had visited Covenant Bible Church in Lincolnton and was impressed with its metal construction. They wanted "to persue [sic] this type of structure. Council agreed but also wants the committee to keep an open mind toward other types of buildings." On September 6 Council met. The evangelism committee suggested that Bethel start having a Sunday night service which would be more informal. "Hopefully this would reach out to the inactive within the community. Motion was made and seconded to endorse this idea." Council approved of the estimate of Swann Roofing for roofing the parsonage of \$2310. Council also approved of taking the two lowest siding bids to the congregation meeting. Council approved of financing the projects from the general fund. The congregational meeting was planned for September 25. Council agreed to allow a Girl Scout troop to meet in the Parish House on Thursdays. Council also approved sending THE LUTHERAN to every member and to all college students.¹⁵

On October 1 Council met. The evangelism committee planned its first interdenominational service for November 13. The worship and music committee reported that no Christmas Eve service was planned this year and that service on Christmas Day would be without Sunday School. The property committee reported that the congregation approved the Pioneer bid for siding to the parsonage. The stewardship committee reported that the goal of \$1500 per month had been met. The youth had appointed Michelle Eudy as the youth representative to Council. On November 6 Council met. Wade Carpenter Jr. reported on the plans for the new church. Each Council member was given a sketch of the building plan which included the estimated cost of \$180,000. The finance committee presented the proposed 1989 budget. Council approved paying its full benevolence and approved the budget of \$56,286. Council also agreed to sponsor the Brownie Troop 208 being established by Beth Auten. On December 4 Council met. The evangelism committee reported that 25 persons attended the Sunday night service. The property committee reported an estimate of \$390 to paint the Parish House. Council approved of the new church plans and voted to present these plans to the congregation on January 8. The plans would be mailed

to all members, and blue prints would be made available. Council accepted the donation of Christmas treats by Forrest Allen. Council approved of using Bethel's name on the community watch program being set up and Adopt a Highway sign being planned by the youth. The following persons were elected to the Church Council at the congregational meeting: Bob Keck, Patricia Carpenter, Elaine Kiser, and Dennis Kiser.¹⁶

On January 3, 1989, the first Church Council meeting of the year was held. The following officers were elected: Hugh Carpenter, vice chairman; Wanda Kiser, secretary; and Prue Carpenter, treasurer. The evangelism committee reported that 19 people attended the last interdenominational service. The chairmen for the committees were appointed. Bethel had been selected by the ELCA "to participate in a study on the National Council of Churches." Council agreed to hold the sessions on January 15, 22, and 29 at 9:45 with the two adult Sunday School classes invited to attend. Council adopted a new format for the treasurer's report which had been proposed by Bruce Kiser. "A discussion was held on the Interdenominational Services and the division resulting from them." One suggested source of the division was "the congregation's lack of knowledge about what is being accomplished at these services." Council approved printing an explanation in the bulletin. Council also approved a motion to "begin planning for the 200th celebration of Bethel's congregation in 1990." On January 8 the called congregational meeting was held to approve the final plans for the new church. Wade Carpenter made a presentation concerning the new plans. Following discussion seven motions were approved by the congregation. The first motion was that the church would be about 6000 square feet and cost under \$200,000. The second motion accepted Squires Construction Company of Charlotte as the contractor. The third motion approved of the front of the church looking "like the drawing submitted by Squires Construction" with details determined at a later date. The fourth motion set February 7 for the building committee to meet and "discuss the placement of the bathrooms, Mother's room, Bride's room, and nursery." The fifth motion removed the first pew on each side so that four more seats could be added to the choir. The sixth motion set February 7 for the building committee to discuss "placement of the fellowship hall, office, kitchen, and choir room." The seventh motion gave the authority to the building committee "to proceed on all of the motions as amended and that they have the authority to select lighting, fixtures, and all items to give us a closer estimate of the cost to erect the new church."¹⁷ The history-making meeting closed with Bethel congregation closer to having a new church sanctuary.

On February 5 Council met. Wade Carpenter met with the Council. He detailed specific changes which the building committee was proposing to the church. The building committee planned to meet with Squires Construction before the planned March 12 congregational meeting. The evangelism committee reported that 35 people attended the last Interdenominational Service. They also reported that Hugh Carpenter and Darrell Carpenter visited 25 homes handing out church newsletters. Council approved the worship and music committee recommendations to allow pastor Leavitt to lead the Lenten services and to have summer services with Sunday School from 9:15 until 9:45 and worship at 10:00. Holy Week services were planned for Long Shoals Baptist Church. Old Time Religion Sunday was planned for October 8, and Claude Carpenter agreed to serve as head usher. Violet Kiser submitted her resignation as cemetery committee treasurer effective March 1. Council approved of Lester and Martha Clark as delegates to Synod and Hub and Sue Sellers as alternate delegates. Council was informed that results of the study on the National Council of Churches revealed that Bethel went on record opposed to membership in the organization. Council appointed the following members to the pastoral relations committee: John B. Carpenter Sr., Kim Poole, Hugh Carpenter, John Singleton, Pat Carpenter, and Rev. Leavitt. On March 7 Council met. The evangelism committee reported that 22 people attended the last Interdenominational Service. Council discussed rescinding the motion made at the last meeting concerning the summer schedule. Council approved a motion "for the summer schedule to remain the same as the rest of the year with Sunday School at 9:45 until 10:45 and Worship Service from 11:00 until 12:00." The cemetery committee had asked Beth Auten to serve as cemetery fund treasurer, and Bob Keck agreed to serve until confirmation was received. The fellowship committee agreed to serve doughnuts and coffee at Easter Sunrise Service. Council approved of the Easter Egg Hunt and for youth to attend Lutheridge. Council agreed for Vacation Bible School to again be with Landers Chapel from July 16-22. Lucille Mauney volunteered to serve as chairman of the new family life committee recommended by the ELCA.¹⁸

On March 12 the called congregational meeting was held to discuss further the church plans. Wade Carpenter presented the newest drawings with the alterations specified. The congregation passed a motion to leave the back of the church unbricked which would save about \$10,000. The congregation understood that the total cost of the church would be about \$180,000. After further discussion the congregation accepted "the general plan as presented by Wade Carpenter." On April 2 Council met. Bruce Kiser presented the findings of the

finance committee concerning lending rates at financial institutions. The Council approved for Bruce to present all his findings to the congregation at the next congregational meeting. Beth Auten accepted the position of cemetery treasurer. The evangelism committee reported 17 persons attended the last Interdenominational Service. Effective June 1 Stacey Wilson resigned as church sexton. The Council approved advertising the job in the bulletin. Elaine Kiser agreed to assume leadership of the nursery in the place of Beth Auten. On April 9 another called congregational meeting was held to discuss financing the building plans. Bruce Kiser, chairman of the finance committee, presented his committee's findings. Following discussion the congregation reached no decision on the financing. The congregation learned that Lola Paysour had expressed "an interest in buying the small portion of the church's land on the other side of the dirt road."¹⁹ The congregation approved the sale. Proceeds would go toward the building fund.

On May 7 Council met. The evangelism committee reported that 39 people attended the Interdenominational Service. Council delayed selling the land to Lola Paysour until the property is surveyed for the Historic Properties designation of the church. Hub Sellers, chairman of the 100th celebration committee, reported to the Council. On June 4 Council met. The evangelism committee reported that 17 people attended the Interdenominational Service. The property committee recommended hiring Mary Frances Carpenter "to clean the church." On June 8 the Gaston County Commissioners approved the designation of Bethel Lutheran Church as an historic property in Gaston County. A number of members attended the meeting and spoke in favor of its designation. On August 10 Council met. Hub Sellers reported to the Council on ideas for the 200th celebration: November, "Scratch Food Meal making all food from old recipes"; December, an old fashioned Christmas with the children presenting "Once Upon A Star"; January, an "old-time service" with members wearing period clothes; February, "Hymn festival" again in period clothes; March, after depriving oneself for Lent, members would donate the money to Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, a mission congregation in southeastern Gastonia; April, "Easter morning service to be held at 8:00am with breakfast afterwards and Sunday School following"; May, "Children's Day"; June, invite Rev. Walter Yount to preach; July, "Celebration of Lutheran Independence"; August, Homecoming service with Bishop McDaniel delivering the message. "Bethel's history will be presented after the meal." Other ideas included a videotape of Bethel, written history of Bethel, a pictorial directory of the membership, commemorative plates, inviting a sister

church to join the celebration, and a square dance.²⁰

On October 1 a called congregational meeting was held. Wade Carpenter presented the final bid by Squires Construction Company. It included a 60 x 100 building for \$182,472 and did not include furniture or parking lots. Squires had agreed that Bethel could subcontract if it would save the church money. Bruce Kiser proposed that Bethel borrow from First Federal Savings & Loan at 10.25% for 15 years. After discussion the congregation passed the motion "to have a written list of the inclusions and exclusions of the bid, the financing options on the church and pews, and a listing of the individual prices of the furnishings presented to the congregation on October 8." On October 8 Council met. The Christian education committee planned a Halloween Party with Landers Chapel for the children. The cemetery fund had a balance of \$1688.74. Council accepted the resignation of Bob Keck from Council. There was some discussion of why the planned October 8 congregational meeting was postponed until October 29. Council approved setting up a separate bank account for the church furnishings. On October 29 the congregational meeting was held. The congregation passed the following motions: to accept Squires Construction as builder; to place a nine months time limit on the building; to accept First Federal Savings and Loan of Lincolnton as lender of \$115,000 for 15 years at 10.25%; to use the land north of the cemetery as collateral on the loan; to appoint Hugh Carpenter, Bruce Kiser, and Wade Carpenter trustees to sign the mortgage; to accept A & O Church Furnishing Company to make the church furniture; to purchase pews with padded seats and backs; to raise money for the pews instead of borrowing it. The motion to move the stained glass window over the altar from the old church to the new church was tabled. A decision on the sound system was also tabled.²¹

On November 5 Council met. Council approved turning in insurance claims on the roofs of the church and Parish House after Hugo the hurricane. The property committee noted that the sewer system would be increased by 1500 gallons in the new church. Council authorized the building committee to study the sound system in the new church. Council also gave the building committee "authority to inspect the progress of the work and to make sure it is being done properly." Council also appointed Wade Carpenter and Rev. Leavitt as church spokesmen with Squires Construction. The finance committee presented the budget for 1990. Council made two changes: It lowered the benevolence from \$8773 to the current level of \$6972. It changed the Lutheran from \$400 to \$450. Council approved Chris Fowler and Kyle Harmon to be confirmed.

Council also approved changing the constitution so that trustees could sign on behalf of the church. On November 12 a called Council meeting was held. Council approved opening a new checking account for the building fund and approved repairing the heating system in the Parish House. On November 26 Bethel held its groundbreaking ceremonies for the new church after the "Scratch Meal." It was a joyous blending of future and past. On December 3 Council met. Council approved the Christmas program to be on December 25 from 10:00 until 12:00. The candlelight service was set for 8:30. Council learned that the loan had been approved on the condition that more collateral be posted by the church. Forrest Allen again donated money for the Christmas treats. On December 17 the annual congregational meeting was held. The congregation approved of the following Council members: John B. Carpenter Jr., Martha Clark, Cyndi Dellinger, Don Kiser, and Sammy Kiser. The congregation approved of the budget of \$58,122 for 1990. On December 31 another congregational meeting was held. A motion was made to allow as collateral on the loan all church property west of Long Shoals Road. This motion was defeated. A second motion was made "to add the parsonage to the property north of the cemetery" as collateral. This motion passed. The constitution change which allowed trustees to sign the mortgage also was approved. A motion to place the pews in the church at an angle also passed.²²

As the year 1989 closed pastor Leavitt and the members of Bethel Lutheran Church could look back upon many changes in the past seven years. Bethel had expanded its ministry with the taping ministry for shut-ins and elderly, by being involved in "Supporting Christians", and with interdenominational services held on Sunday nights. Bethel congregation had improved its parsonage and Parish House. The membership approved the purchase of a new organ. But the most divisive and difficult issue was whether to build the "new church." For four years from 1986 until 1989 the church wrestled with the issue. With the vote on December 31, 1989, Bethel prepared for the future with its final approval of the "new church" and its financing. It may be ironic that the decision came so close to the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the congregation which became Bethel. So while Bethel's members looked forward, they also looked backward. They anticipated the various activities planned for 1990 which would help them celebrate Bethel's heritage.

1 Council Minutes II, pp. 213-218.

2 Council Minutes III, April 10-June 12, 1983. The next set of Church

Council Minutes will be referred to as Council Minutes III. Since the minutes are placed in a Loose-leaf notebook chronologically, they will be referred to by date.

- 3 Ibid., July 3-December 11, 1983.
- 4 Ibid., January 8-March 11, 1984.
- 5 Ibid., April 2-July 1, 1984.
- 6 Ibid., August 5-September 30, 1984.
- 7 Ibid., October 14-December 9, 1984.
- 8 Ibid., January 6-May 5, 1985.
- 9 Ibid., June 2-December 8, 1985.
- 10 Ibid., January 5-April 6, 1986.
- 11 Ibid., May 4-December 7, 1986.
- 12 Ibid., January 4-June 7, 1987.
- 13 Ibid., July 12-December 27, 1987.
- 14 Ibid., January 1-February 6, 1988.
- 15 Ibid., March 6-September 25, 1988.
- 16 Ibid., October 1-December 4, 1988.
- 17 Council Minutes IV, January 3-January 8, 1989. These members are also in a separate spiral-bound looseleaf notebook.
- 18 Ibid., February 5-March 7, 1989.
- 19 Ibid., March 12-April 9, 1989.
- 20 Ibid., May 7-August 10, 1989.
- 21 Ibid., October 1-October 29, 1989.
- 22 Ibid., November 5-December 31, 1989.

CONCLUSION

As 1990 became a reality, so too did the "new church." As construction began, the membership became more excited. With each month Bethel in some way observed its past. The various monthly celebration activities were well attended. A committee reviewed a new constitution. Plans were made for Vacation Bible School and for a summer worship service schedule. Everyday church activities continued. But 1990 was more than just another year. At Bethel the past met the present.¹ As the membership paused to recall, it continued forward with construction and programs.

As Bethel recalled its past and anticipated its future, the words of Ed Harmon put a special kind of perspective on this time: "My daddy always said, 'the best people in the world are at Bethel,' and they still are." The people of Bethel are people like John Fronebarger, who gave land for Long Creek Congregation, and Emanuel Carpenter, the schoolmaster who led the congregation during dark times without a regular minister. The people of Bethel helped inspire four ministers of the Gospel: Rev. M. L. Carpenter, Rev. Jonas M. Senter, Rev. L. J. Sidney Carpenter, and Rev. R. M. Carpenter. The people of Bethel are people like "Tennessee" John F. Carpenter, a church leader who laid the bricks for the church, and Sylvannus "Van" Pasour, who opened his home for worship, who attended church regularly, and who taught Sunday School for years. The people of Bethel are organists and pianists: Diane K. Carpenter, Iris Carpenter, Sue Sellers, Inez Dellinger, Eunice Kiser, Lizzie Harmon, Hazel Carpenter, Lizzie Carpenter Heishmann, Emma Lee Carpenter, and many others. The people of Bethel are people like G. Loy Carpenter, long-time church officer and Sunday School superintendent; D. C. Kiser, long-time church secretary and church elder; church treasurers like Anderson Kiser, Howard Carpenter, Earl Payseur, Sue Sellers, and Prue Carpenter. The people of Bethel taught Sunday School and Bible School, attended worship, served on committees, planned special activities, planned Homecoming and cookouts, and helped others.

The people of Bethel also served as an example in the community. Two schools in Gaston County - Lingerfeldt Elementary and Kiser Elementary - were named after former Bethel Church members: Robert Lingerfeldt and Oscar L. Kiser. Education has always been important to the membership. Since 1947 at least 12

members have been identified as being either valedictorian or salutatorian of their graduating high school classes. Of the 12 since 1976 three valedictorians and four salutatorians were members of Bethel Church. Truly Bethel produces excellent students. Because of the importance of education to Bethel's members many have chosen education as a profession. For example the Michael Kiser family amassed over 100 years in the teaching profession. Currently Bethel has many members who are active or former educators. But originally the membership depended upon farming for their income. As modern times arrived, more farmers left to assume other occupations. But Bethel still has three active farmers in membership and a number of other members who farm part-time. Others at Bethel work in banking, as mechanics, in textile jobs, in governmental jobs, as secretaries, in sales positions, as homemakers, and other jobs. Wherever Bethel's members may be, they reflect the faith of their forefathers.

Through the years the people of Bethel have expressed a genuine conservatism. As members of the Tennessee Synod Reorganized and the Concordia English District, Bethel remained faithful to the "good old way" and was cautious of change. Its members still maintain respect for tradition. The people of Bethel tend to maintain a low profile in activities. They are content to get the job done without fanfare and regardless of who may get the credit. The people of Bethel who Ed Harmon and his father spoke of are both dead and alive. They reflect the nature of the Christian witness. With faith in God and love for their neighbor the people of Bethel will withstand for another 200 years.

1 Recollections of the author.

PHOTOGRAPHY SECTION

Without the assistance of Diane K. Carpenter the Photography Section would not have existed. She gathered pictures and did the leg work to get many pictures copied. Wanda K. Huffstetler volunteered to take pictures which have also been included in this book. Many thanks to all hereafter mentioned who allowed us to use their pictures.

Fig. 1 - Rev. David Henkel - picture taken from Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers with permission of the N. C. Synod.

Fig. 2 - Rev. George S. Pasour - picture used with permission of its owner, Howard H. Pasour of Dallas.

Fig. 3 - Rev. Michael Luther Carpenter, a son of the congregation - picture used with permission of its owner, Robert C. Carpenter of Bessemer City.

Fig. 4 - Rev. Benjamin L. Westenbarger, pastor when the brick church was built - picture used with permission of its owner, James S. Pasour of Bessemer City.

Fig. 5 - Rev. Jonas M. Senter, a son of the congregation - picture taken from Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers with permission of the N. C. Synod.

Fig. 6 - Rev. L. J. Sidney Carpenter, a son of the congregation, served as secretary of the church and returned for special occasions - picture used with permission of its owner, Donna C. Kinley.

Fig. 7 - Rev. Rubertus M. Carpenter, a son of the congregation served Bethel as supply pastor in 1924 and served at Homecomings and special occasions - picture used with permission of its owner, Robert C. Carpenter of Bessemer City.

Fig. 8 - Rev. John C. Dietz - picture taken from Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers with permission of the N. C. Synod.

Fig. 9 - Rev. O. W. Aderholdt - picture taken from Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers with permission of the N. C. Synod.

Fig. 10 - Rev. F. M. Speagle - picture taken from Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers with permission of the N. C. Synod.

Fig. 11 - Rev. H. P. Barringer - picture used with permission of its owner, Mrs. Sue Sellers of Crouse.

Fig. 12- Rev. Walter N. Yount - picture furnished to the author by Rev. Yount.

Fig. 13- Rev. Roy L. Fisher - picture taken from Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers with permission of the N. C. Synod.

Fig. 14- Rev. L. Summie Miller - picture taken from Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers with permission of the N. C. Synod.

Fig. 15- Rev. Bruce Sigmon, served on numerous occasions as supply pastor at Bethel - picture taken from Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers with permission of the N. C. Synod.

Fig. 16- Rev. Charles Leavitt - picture furnished to the author by Rev. Leavitt.

Fig. 17- Rev. Tommy K. Beaver at Groundbreaking Services for the Educational Building with John Singleton, Mrs. Violet Caldwell Kiser, Sammy Kiser - members of Bethel Building Commission; Rev. David L. Martin, assistant to president of N. C. Synod - picture used with permission of the owner, Violet C. Kiser of Bessemer City.

Fig. 18- "Tennessee" John F. Carpenter, the builder of Bethel Church 1893, with wife Dulcenia Alexander Carpenter and children M. Alexander Carpenter, Rev. L. J. Sidney Carpenter, Vennie Setzer, John E. Carpenter Sr., and Ella Carpenter - picture used with permission of its owner, Mrs. Libby Carpenter of Lincolnton.

Fig. 19- Ella Kiser donated her possessions to Bethel Church which made possible the construction of the parsonage - picture used with permission of its owner, Diane K. Carpenter of Lincolnton.

Fig. 20- Marian Sylvannus "Van" Pasour, in whose home Bethel congregation met when the church burned in 1892, with wife Mary Jane - picture used with permission of its owner, Violet C. Kiser.

Fig. 21- Bethel Lutheran Church, cornerstone laid 1893, services first held 1894, completed and dedicated 1898 - picture taken by Wanda K. Huffstetler.

Fig. 22- Interior altar area of Bethel Church 1893. Pulpit, lecturn, altar, and window dedicated during the remodeling of the 1940's - picture by Wanda K. Huffstetler.

Fig. 23- Bethel Church Historic Properties Designation sign - picture by Wanda K. Huffstetler.

Fig. 24- Bethel Church Cemetery with earliest graves dating in the 1880's. Church and Parish House are in the background - picture by Wanda K. Huffstetler.

Fig. 25- Parish House built 1952 - picture by Wanda K. Huffstetler.

Fig. 26- Parsonage built 1968 primarily through the posthumous gift of Miss Ella Kiser - picture by Wanda K. Huffstetler.

Fig. 27- Educational Building built 1974. The "new church" will be located adjacent to it - picture by Wanda K. Huffstetler.

Fig. 28- "New Church" as it appeared under construction on June 27, 1990 with a projected completion date of August, 1990 - picture by Wanda K. Huffstetler.



Fig. 1 Rev. David Henkel 1814-1830



Fig. 2 Rev. George S. Pasour
1873-1877



Fig. 3 Rev. Michael L. Carpenter
1877-1891

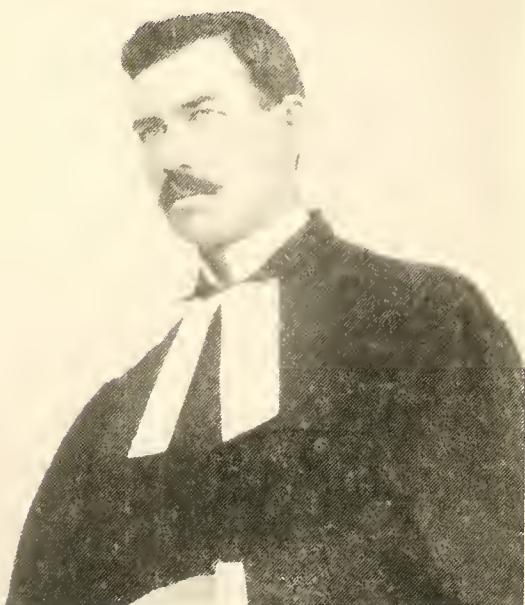


Fig. 4 Rev. Benjamin L. Westen-
barger 1891-1895



Fig. 5 Rev. Jonas M. Senter
1903-1912

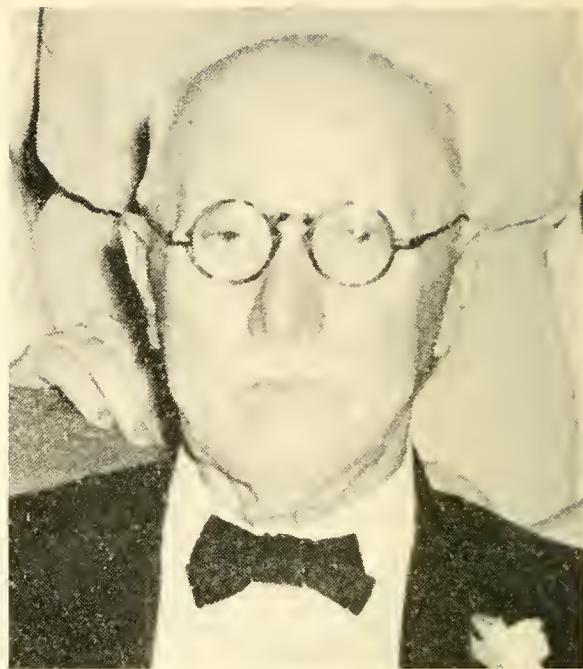


Fig. 6 Rev. L. J. Sidney Carpenter,
son of the congregation



Fig. 7 Rev. Rubertus M. Carpenter,
son of the congregation

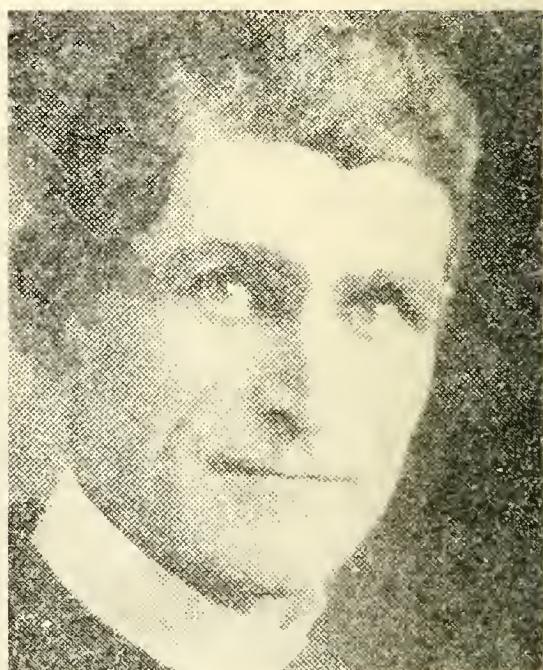


Fig. 8 Rev. John C. Dietz 1912-1914

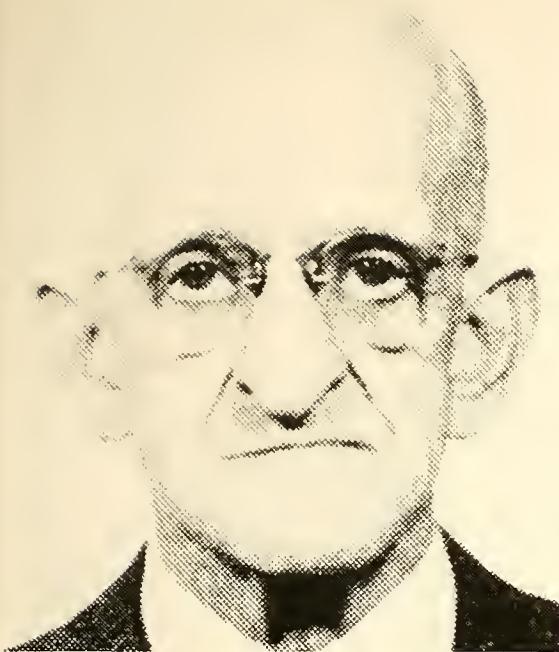


Fig. 9 Rev. O. W. Aderholdt
1915-1919

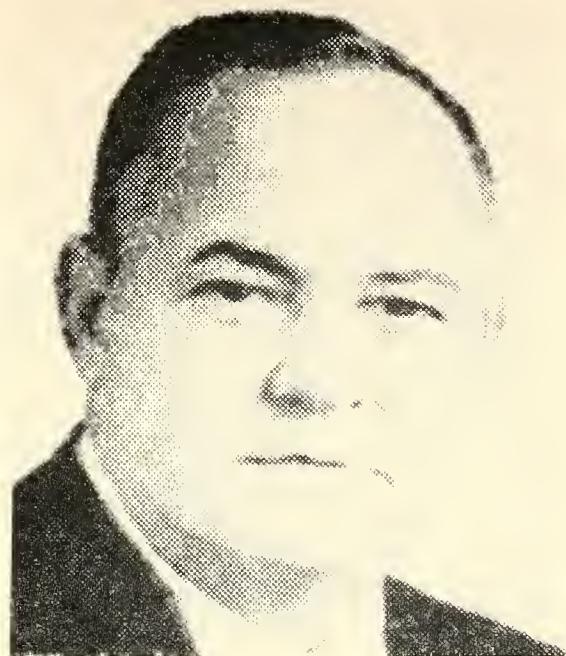


Fig. 10 Rev. F. M. Speagle
1925-1928



Fig. 11 Rev. H. P. Barringer
1932-1940

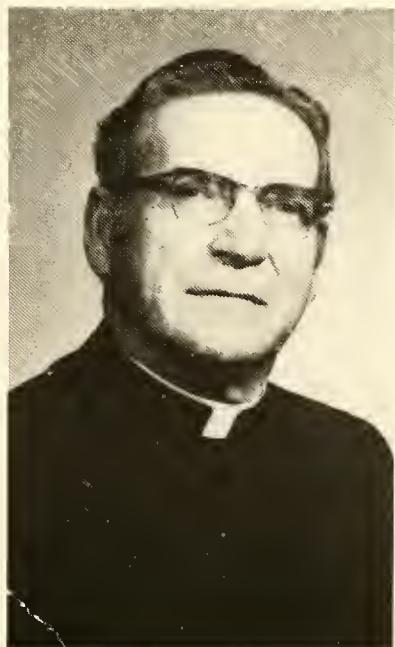


Fig. 12 Rev. Walter N. Yount
1940-1942



Fig. 13 Rev. Roy L. Fisher
1942-1943



Fig. 14 Rev. L. Summie Miller
1943-1961

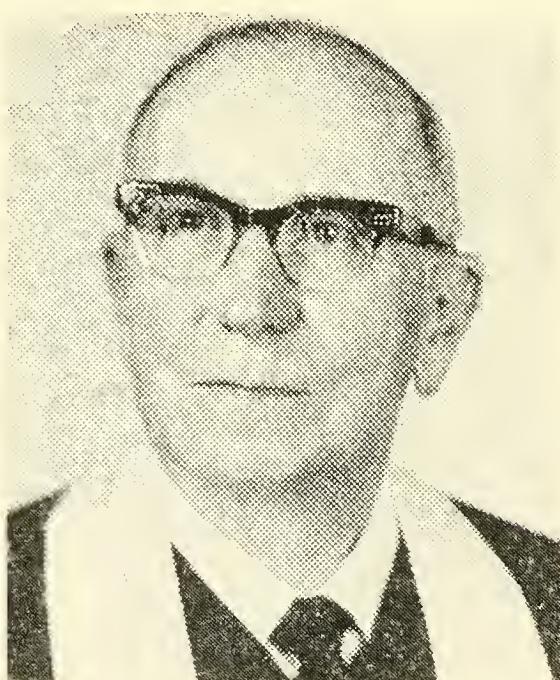


Fig. 15 Rev. Bruce Sigmon, supply
pastor

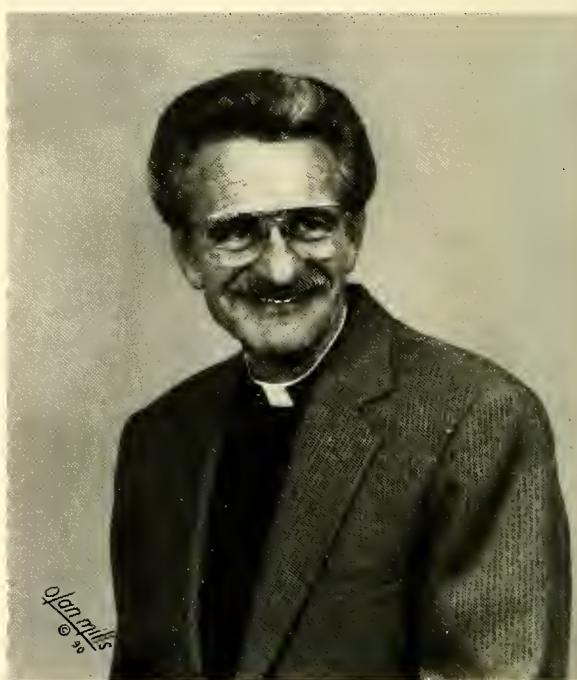


Fig. 16 Rev. Charles Leavitt
1982-Present



Fig. 17 (L-R) John Singleton, Mrs. Violet Caldwell Kiser, Sammy Kiser, Rev. David L. Martin, and Rev. Tommy K. Beaver



Fig. 18 (L-R) M. Alexander Carpenter, Rev. L. J. Sidney Carpenter, Vennie C. Setzer, John E. Carpenter, Ella Carpenter; (seated) Dulcenia A. Carpenter, and "Tennessee" John F. Carpenter



Fig. 19 Ella Kiser, Bethel benefactor



Fig. 20 M. S. "Van" Pasour and wife Mary Jane



Fig. 21 Bethel Church 1893 built by the members



Fig. 22 Bethel Church interior altar area



Fig. 23 Bethel Church Historic Properties sign



Fig. 24 Bethel Church Cemetery



Fig. 25 Parish House, 1952



Fig. 26 Parsonage, 1968



Fig. 27 Educational Building 1974



Fig. 28 "New Church" 1990

APPENDIX

The Appendix is a compilation of material which may be of interest to the reader and is not readily available in the text of the book. The entries include membership lists, lists for special donations, land deeds, and other data. The source for each entry may be found in brackets: []. Special thanks go to Diane K. Carpenter for transcribing the majority of the material in the Appendix.

LIST OF PASTORS

[The following was compiled by the author from known sources]

Rev. Johann Gottfried Arends (Arndt)	1790-1807
Rev. Philip Henkel as assistant to Rev. Arndt	1805-1807
Rev. Philip Henkel	1807-1814
David Henkel (before ordination)	1814-1819
Rev. David Henkel	1819-1830
Rev. Adam Miller	?1831-1853
George L. Hunt (before ordination)	1853-1858
Rev. George L. Hunt	1858-1873
Rev. George S. Pasour	1873-1877
Rev. Michael L. Carpenter	1877-1891
Rev. Benjamin L. Westenbarger	1891-1895
Rev. John H. Wannemacher	1895-1899
Rev. George A. Derhammer	1900-1902
Rev. Jonas M. Senter	1903-1912
Rev. John C. Dietz	1912-1914
Rev. O. W. Aderholdt	1915-1919
Rev. C. O. Lippard	1920-1924
Rev. R. M. Carpenter (supply pastor)	1924
Rev. F. M. Speagle	1925-1928
Rev. J. J. Bickley	1928-1932
Rev. H. P. Barringer	1932-1940
Rev. Walter N. Yount	1940-1942
Rev. Roy L. Fisher	1942-1943
Rev. L. Summie Miller	1943-1961
Rev. Roy L. Trexler	1961-1964
Rev. Wade Norman	1965-1968
Rev. Tommy K. Beaver	1969-1974
Rev. Steve Hackney	1975-1979
Rev. Darrell Norris	1980-1982
Rev. Charles Leavitt	1982 - Present

LIST OF CHURCH BUILDINGS AND LOCATIONS

[The following was compiled by the author from known sources]

1790-1827? or later	Little Mountain Meeting House (also known as Long Creek Congregation after 1813) was located at the gap of Pasour Mountain. The church burned.
1835-1860	"Old Log Church" (services held together with Methodists) was located near present Landers Chapel Methodist Church. The Lutheran congregation left to secure its own land and build its own church.
1860-?1868?	Small log building constructed by Jonas Senter was located at the present location of Bethel Church. It was to be a temporary church building.
?1868-1892	Frame church (called Bethel Church for the first time) was located at the present location. It burned.
1892-1894	Church services were held at Marion Sylvannus "Van" Pasour's house from the time the frame church burned until the roof was placed on the new brick sanctuary.
1893-1990	Brick structure was built at the present location. The cornerstone was laid in 1893 but services did begin at the new brick church until 1894 when the roof was in place. The church was not completed and dedicated until 1898.
1990-Future	New Church being constructed beside the Educational Building.

SYNODICAL AFFILIATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[The following was compiled by the author from known sources]

1790-1803	No synod existed
1803-1820	North Carolina Synod
1820-1846	Tennessee Synod
1846-1849	No synodical connection
1849-1884	Tennessee Synod Reorganized
1884-1912	Concordia English District of the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States
1912-1921	Tennessee Synod
1921-Present	North Carolina Synod

Bethel also belonged to the following national synodical organizations:

1912-1921	Unified Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the South
1921-1962	United Lutheran Church in America
1963-1988	Lutheran Church in America
1988-Present	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

DEED TO LONG CREEK CONGREGATION

[The following is the transcription of the deed to Long Creek Congregation which was when our congregation met at the gap of Pasour Mountain. It is filed at Lincoln County Courthouse in Book 26, page 393-394.]

This indenture made the 18th day of September in the year of Our Lord 1814 between John Fronebarger Sr. of the County of Lincoln and State of North Carolina of the one part and Adam Deck and George Sellers and their successors as Trustees of the German Lutheran and Reformed Church at Long Creek of the County and State aforesaid of the other past witnesseth that the said John Fronebarger for and in consideration of the sum of One Dollar to him in hand paid by the said Deck & Sellers at or before the reading and delivering of these presents the receipt where of the said John Fronebarger doth hereby acknowledge hath given granted bargained and sold released and confirmed unto the said Adam Deck and George Sellers and their successors of unto the members of said described congregation all that piece or parcel of land situated, lying, and being in the county and State aforesaid on the South side of the Shoals Branch of Long Creek and bounded as follows to wit beginning at a maple thence running South 10 East 12 poles to a Hickory then South 55 East 12 poles to a post oak then into the swamp below the Spring 20 poles to a white oak and maple thence 34 poles to the beginning containing by estimation two acres more or less to have and to hold the said piece or parcel of land and all and singular the lands and premises above mentioned with their buildings improvements woods ways water courses profits commodities advantages and appurtenances whatsoever and the reversion and reversions remainder and remainders rents issues and profits thereof unto the proper use and behoof of this said congregation namely the German Lutheran and German Reformed their successors and assigns forever to have and to hold the said tract and parcel of land and all and singular the above mentioned and described premises and every part there of unto the said trustees their successors members and assigns forever.

And the said John Fronebarger and his heirs the said piece, tract, or parcel of land above described and premises thereunto belonging unto the said Trustees Adam Deck and George Sellers and their successors and members against all person or persons whatsoever lawfully blaming said premises or any part or thereof by from or under him them or any of them shall and will warrant

and forever defend by these presents. In witness whereof the said John Fronebarger hath hereunto set his hands and affixed his seal the day and year above written.

Signed Sealed and
Delivered in presence of
Moses Wilson
William Fronebarger

his
John X Fronebarger
mark

State of North Carolina
Lincoln County October

Sessions 1814

The within deed of sale was proved in open court by the oath of Moses Wilson recorded and ordered to be registered.

Witness James T. Alexander
for Vardry McBee CC

THE VINDICATION OF REV. DAVID HENKEL

[The following was one of petitions "Vindicating the Character" of Rev. David Henkel. It is located at the back of the Diary of Rev. David Henkel at the Lutheran Archives in Salisbury.]

January 16th, 1820

The Subscribers living near the waters of Beaverdam and Longcreek say the same in substance with respect to the character of the Reverend David Henkel, as the above.

Jacob Aderholt
Michael Rudisill
John Bohm
George Zeller
Philip Zeller
Jacob Froneberger
John Froneberger

John Blackwood Esq.
John Froneberger Jr.
John Zeller
Henry Zeller
Joshua Roberts
William Froneberger
John Roberts

CHURCH PROPOSAL BY REV. DAVID HENKEL

[This paper was found in the David Hinkel (Henkel) Papers in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill]

Proposals for Building a house of publick worship on or Between the waters of Beaverdam and Long Creek as the commissioners may direct. Every regular authorized minister whose conduct is blameless and possesses to believe the following doctrine and is willing to vindicate it Viz. First That Jesus Christ is real God and Man and that his manhood is taken up into the God head and that therefore he according to his human Nature he is Almighty all knowing to every where present to gather with possessing every other divine attribute.

Second, That Jesus Christ suffered infinitely, that he died, that he was buried and that he descended into hell that he rose from the dead and is exalted above the heavens and that his sufferings are meritorious. Third, that Jesus Christ suffered and died to procure Everlasting Salvation for Everyone of all the human race and that unbelief is the rejection of the Saviour's merits is the cause of men's damnation. Fourth, That Christ Instituted means of grace which contain the grace of God and is hereby to all who do not willfully reject those graces they are his Word, the Old and New testaments, Water Baptism, and the Lord's Supper to which must be added prayer and the laying on of the minister's hands in Confirmation. Fifth, That Water Baptism effect the new birth or regeneration in all those who do not willfully oppose this grace given thereby and that it is essential to Salvation. Sixth, That the Lord's Supper is more than a shadow or a type that the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is present and inseperably connected with the Elements of Bread and Wine thus consecrated that consequently those who do not oppose Christ receive his body and blood to everlasting life and they who willfully oppose through unbelief receive his body and blood to their temporal curse which which will effect an eternal H not repented of in days of their pro- pation. Seventh, that prayer and confirmation by the laying on of hands are necessary to increase faith and holiness.

Eighth, that the sinner must pray for a faith to believe the above mentioned Efficiency of High means which produce a holy heart and a upright con-

duct to disbelieve this virtue of the above mentioned means is unbelief and a regeneration of Jesus Christ because Christ is to be found in those hearts of grace already mentioned.

Ninth, that it is possible of a child of God to depart from the true faith and be lost forever.

Tenth, all that wish to preach at this meeting house must first apply to one or more Elders on counsel of this congregation whose duty it shall be to ask such a minister that applies for admission whether he professes to believe all the above mentioned articles and if he does he may be allowed to preach but if he does not profess to believe and to vindicate them he shall not be allowed in this meeting house.

COMMUNICANT MEMBERS IN 1858 & 1859

[The following are records from the Emanuel Carpenter Papers of the A. B. "Gus" Kiser Collection, currently held by Clyde Kiser of Bessemer City. It has been reproduced exactly as written and includes notes probably made by "Gus" Kiser.]

Communicant members in 1858 & 1859 at the old Lutheran church that stood near where Lander's Chapel now stands, this was known as the old log Church.

- 1 Carpenter Emanuel.
- 2 wife Katie (kiser) Carpenter
- 3 Carpenter Frederick (grand-daddy Feddie)
- 4 wife Martha (Froneberger) Carpenter,
- 5 Betsie Carpenter
- 6 Christeen Carpenter
- 7 Barbara Carpenter
- 8 Frederick Carpenter Jr. (Tanner Fred)

- 9 Carpenter Michoel.
- 10 wife Rebecca (Carpenter) Carpenter
- 11 Catherine Carpenter
- 12 Francis Carpenter
- 13 John Carpenter (Tennessee John)
- 14 Lawson Carpenter (Brother To the John above)
- 15 Carpenter W. B. (Big foot Billy)
- 16 wife Barbara (Kiser) Carpenter
- 17 Carpenter Millie
- 18 Froneberger John
- 19 wife Margaret (Kiser) Froneberger
- 20 Hunt Sara, wife of Rev. George Hunt
- 21 Kiser Philip
- 22 wife, Louise (Carpenter) Kiser
- 23 John Kiser (Jack)
- 24 Pasour John (Father of the late Sylvanus Pasour)
- 25 Wife, Elmina (Rhyne) Pasour
- 26 Summey John B.
- 27 wife Nancy (Kiser) Summey
- 28 Senter Jonas (father of Rev.Jonas Senter)
- 29 wife Malinda (Carpenter) Senter
- 30 Mahala Senter (sister of Jonas)

Additional communicant members after the congregation moved to the present site of Bethel Church, in the old log building erected in 1860

- 31 Carpenter Caleb
- 32 ----- Sarah
- 33 Crane Margaret (Pasour) a sister of Adam Pasour &wife of Stanhope Crane
- 34 Froneberger Jonas
- 35 wife Elmina (Clemmer) Froneberger
- 36 Froneberger Susanah
- 37 ----- Katie
- 38 ----- Barbara

39 Hovis John
40 wife Lottie (Pasour) Hovis
41 Hager M.Magdalean (Grand mother of Sample Hager)
42 Kiser Simri.
43 George Kiser (brother of Simri)
44 wife Sallie (Froneberger) Kiser
45 Barbara Kiser
46 Elizebeth Kiser The daughters of Big Jim Kiser also the Caroline Neal was
47 Christene Kiser a daughter of his
48 Caleb Kiser
49 Annie Kiser (father was Philip Kiser)
50 Christ Kiser (a,cousin of the above Simri Kiser)
51 McKee Peggy
52 Pasour Sam
53 wife Susan Pasour
54 SALLIE Pasour
55 Hannah Wells

DEED TO PRESENT LOCATION OF BETHEL CHURCH

[The following is the transcription of the deed to the current location of Bethel Church. It is filed at Gaston County Courthouse Book 3, page 187.]

This indenture made on the 6th day of March 1860 between William Sloan of the County of Gaston and State of North Carolina of the first part and John Pasour, Jonas Senter, and Emanuel Carpenter Trustees of the Lutheran Religious Society of the other part Witnesseth that for and in consideration of the natural respect I bear towards all Religious Societies hath given granted and bargained and by these presents doth give grant and bargain and sell unto the said John Pasour, Jonas Senter, and Emanuel Carpenter Trustees as aforesaid and their successors in office a certain tract piece or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Gaston bounded as follows Beginning at a Stake on the Company line and runs N 60 W 15 poles to a Stake. Thence S 30 W 30 poles to a Stake, thence S 60 E 15 poles to a Stake on the old line. Thence to the beginning by Estimation nearly three acres. To have and to hold with all and singular the appertenances there unto belonging or in any wise appertaining to them the said trustees as aforesaid and their successors in office in fee Simple forever, in trust for the use and behoof of the said Lutheran Society. In Witness where of the Said William Sloan doth hereunto set his hand and affix his Seal the day and year above written.

Signed Sealed & delivered
in presence of
J. G. Lewis
J. F. Pegram

Wm Sloan
ackd.

State of North Carolina Aug Sess 1860
Gaston County

The execution of this deed was duly acknowledged is recorded and ordered to be Registered

Witness Amzi Ford CCC

PLEDGES FOR PASTOR'S SALARY

[This loose paper was found in the papers owned by Mrs. Wade Carpenter Sr. of Rt. 6, Lincolnton. It documents an attempt to establish a mission church near where Webb's Chapel Baptist Church now stands.]

Carpenters School house Oct. 1, 1882

We, the undersigned, will pay to Rev. M. L. Carpenter the amount annexed to our names, for services as pastor, at the above named place.

What you give, give freely, for, "the Lord loves a cheerful giver."

J. F. Carpenter	\$1.00
L. H. Kiser	\$1.00
Macus Carpenter	\$1.00
J. B. Summy	\$1.00
?J.? (G?) A. Summey	\$1.00
Moses ?Hovis? (Hains?)	\$1.00 (marked out)
J. W. Weaver	.50
W. B. Carpenter	.50
F. E. Carpenter	.25

CONSTITUTION OF THE BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN GASTON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

-Jan. 10, 1893

[The following persons attested to the first church constitution, and it was written into Bethel Churchbook I]

Signed by:

1. Caleb Carpenter	21. Zimri Kiser
2. J. F. Carpenter	22. J. E. Setzer
3. John Goldsworthy	23. J. M. Carpenter
4. W. B. Carpenter	24. Johnas Senter
5. E. Carpenter	25. Philip S. Kiser
6. F. E. Carpenter	26. Andrew Pasour
7. Philip Kiser	27. J. A. Friday
8. John Kiser	28. C. S. Carpenter
9. John Summey	29. F. Carpenter
10. Hiram Kiser	30. M. A. Carpenter
11. M. S. Pasour	31. L. M. Thornburg
12. Moses Thornburg	32. J. W. Pierce
13. J. M. Senter	33. D. H. Harmon
14. J. E. Senter	34. P. S. Carpenter
15. J. B. Summey	35. J. D. Froneberger
16. L. J. S. Carpenter	36. C. A. Kiser
17. Larken Pasour	37. J. B. Summey, Jr.
18. H. J. A. Carpenter	38. J. M. L. Carpenter
19. W. S. Carpenter	39. T. P. Pasour
20. Daniel Thornburg	

PAROCHIAL REPORTS FOR BETHEL CHURCH

[Diane Carpenter compiled this data from various parochial reports]

CONCORDIA ENGLISH DISTRICT

	Active Membership	Total Membership	Value of Church Property	Local Expenses	Total Financial	Avg. Per Member
8/1897 - 8/1898-	68	175	\$1522.00	\$344.25	\$346.25	--
8/1898 - 5/1899-	69	182	1616.00	105.00	?	--
1909-	80	195	1850.00	600.00	600.00	--
1910-	85	202	2525.00	180.00	783.13	--

TENNESSEE SYNOD

1913-	94	134	2800.00	295.87	360.87	\$3.83
1914-	94	134	2800.00	--	--	--
1915-	80	136	2800.00	66.29	66.29	--
1916-	80	130	2800.00	345.60	384.25	4.60
1919-	95	148	3000.00	390.04	552.27	5.81

BAPTISMS BEFORE 1900

[Compiled from Bethel Lutheran Churchbook I]

<u>Child</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Date of Baptism</u>
Emma Birtha Friday	William & Lou Friday	4/25/1892	7/21/1892
Mary Ora Bell Friday	J. A. & L. E. Friday	11/14/1891	8/7/1892
Carrie Ellen Shrum	J. A. & Isabella Shrum	6/21/1892	11/21/1892
Lawrence Sidney Carpenter/W. S. & M. M. Carpenter		9/2/1892	11/6/1892
Clarence Thurman Carpenter/P. Sylvanus & Rebecca Carpenter		12/31/1892	2/20/1893
Albert Sain Carpenter	Frederick E. & Mary Jane Carpenter	4/21/1892	4/22/1893
Benjamin Herbert Carpenter/J. M. L. & M. C. Carpenter		3/31/1893	5/17/1893
Amy Lee Setzer	John E. & Alice A. Setzer	3/21/1893	5/21/1893
Candace Lucy Bright Pasour/M. S. & Mary Jane Pasour		4/1/1893	5/21/1893
Nettie Estel Costner	Eli S. & Nancy Ann Costner	1/19/1893	5/21/1893
Carrie Elizabeth Bright Pasour/William & Ellen Pasour		4/28/1893	7/16/1893
Doras Clay Pasour	F. P. & Emma L. Pasour	6/4/1893	6/18/1893
Walter Ransom Carpenter	M. A. & Josephine Kiser Carpenter	9/30/1893	2/14/1893
Walter Tressel Kiser	L. H. & Mary Jane Carpenter Kiser	12/16/1893	12/27/1893
Jacob Osborn Harmon	Henderson & Barbara Kiser Harmon	11/2/1893	12/28/1893
Eliza Emmaranda Carpenter/Jasper & C. E. White Carpenter		9/14/1893	1/21/1894
Ora Bell Senter	J. E. & S. C. Kiser Senter	3/17/1894	5/27/1894
McLoy Cloninger	Andrew & M. A. Lynch Cloninger	11/19/1893	7/28/1894
Lewis Dayton Carpenter	Luther & M. C. Carpenter Carpenter	1/21/1895	3/1/1895
Emma Vida Rudisill	Eli & C. Kiser Rudisill	1/28/1894	3/1/1895
Onis Ada Carpenter	W. S. & W. M. Rudisill Carpenter	12/1/1894	3/5/1894
Ellis Cline Pierce	John & Rosa Shrum Pierce	8/20/1895	8/18/1895

<u>Child</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Date of Baptism</u>
Mary Etter Ethel Pasour	M. S. & Mary Jane Pasour	8/20/1895	9/6/1895
Kelly Besch Carpenter	Jn. F. & Dulcinia Carpenter	5/6/1895	5/12/1895
Lillian Pearl Carpenter	P. S. & R. M. Carpenter	2/21/1895	12/17/1895
Rachel Amelia Carpenter	L. J. S. & Anna Lee Hefner Carpenter	11/7/1895	11/24/1895
Daniel Edgar Napoleon Setzer	J. E. & Alice Carpenter Setzer	10/19/1895	12/5/1895
Earl Nathaniel Senter	J. E. & S. C. Kiser Senter	12/10/1895	1/19/1896
Luther Napoleon Carpenter	L. M. & Callie Carpenter Carpenter	1/17/1896	3/1/1896
Carl Graden Carpenter	J. S. & I. L. Carpenter Carpenter	1/19/1896	3/1/1896
Dalton Dennis Dixon	James & Ella Rudisill Dixon	2/2/1896	4/5/1896
Mary Marguerite Carpenter	C. S. & N. A. White Carpenter	7/18/1896	9/6/1896
Lawrence Edwin Pasour	Frank & Emma E. Pasour	9/27/1896	11/24/1896
Anderson Bryan Kiser	Philippe & Minne Kiser	10/15/1896	1/3/1897
Columbus Zimri Harmon	D. H. & Barbara Harmon	1/25/1897	4/18/1897
Nancy Caroline Carpenter	W. S. & M. M. Carpenter	3/30/1897	6/6/1897
Grady Sylvanus Carpenter	P. S. & Rebecca Carpenter	4/25/1897	6/20/1897
Roy Lee Senter	J. E. & S. E. Senter	6/9/1897	10/17/1897
Lulu Pearl Summey	J. B. & M. N. E. Summey	10/17/1897	11/9/1897
Daniel Shuford Summey	Jacob & Minnie Summey	12/ /1897	1/2/1898
Anna Bell Kiser	Philipp & Minnie Kiser		5/15/1898
Samuel Lee Carpenter	M. A. & Josephine Carpenter	5/11/1898	5/15/1898
Bonnie Eloise Mauney	W. A. & Candace Miller Mauney	1/26/1897	6/6/1898
Jennie Leon Carpenter	Jasper & Cora White Carpenter	1/28/1898	6/19/1898
John L. Setzer	John & Alice Carpenter Setzer	2/26/1898	6/19/1898
William Burton Pasour	F. P. & Emma Kiser Pasour	8/28/1898	9/3/1898
Arthur Stevenson Anthony	Jasper W. & Nancy S. Carpenter Anthony	8/2/1898	9/12/1898
Vivian Viola Uren	John & Josephine Kiser Uren	4/14/1898	9/13/1898
Carrie Ellen Murphy	S. O. & Sarah J. Summey Murphy	12/5/1897	9/13/1898
Samuel Silvanus Pasour	M. S. & M. J. Pasour	12/11/1898	1/1/1899
Vera Vivian Carpenter	J. M. L. & M. Callie Carpenter	9/7/1898	2/19/1899
Iva Lee Carpenter	P. S. & Rebecca Carpenter	4/1/1899	5/21/1899

<u>Child</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Date of Baptism</u>
Ora Murriel Froneberger/David & Elizabeth Carpenter	Froneberger	5/17/1899	8/20/1899
Frederick Gotthelf Carpenter/W. S. & Mary Carpenter		10/19/1899	10/19/1899

CHURCH OFFICERS BEFORE 1900

[Compiled from Bethel Lutheran Churchbook I]

Feb. 19, 1893 -	President - John Carpenter Elder - John Goldsworthy Elder - W. Sidney Carpenter Elder - John Setzer Secretary - John Summey, Jr. Treasurer - John F. Kiser
March 18, 1894 -	President - J. F. Carpenter Elder - John Setzer Elder - John F. Kiser Elder - Sylvanus Pasour Sec. - C. Sylvannus Carpenter Treas. - Larken Pasour
Jan. 19, 1896 -	Pres. - J. F. Carpenter Sec. - L. J. S. Carpenter Treas. - P. S. Carpenter Elder - J. E. Senter Elder - C. Sylvanus Carpenter Elder - Sylvanus Pasour
Mar. 7, 1897	Pres. - P. S. Carpenter Sec. - L. J. S. Carpenter Treas. - Frank Pasour Elder - J. E. Senter Elder - J. F. Carpenter Elder - Sylvanus Pasour

Jumps to 1913

MARRIAGES BEFORE 1900

[Compiled from Bethel Lutheran Churchbook I]

Mr. Jesse M. Arp	<u>Date</u>
Miss Fannie E. Friday	2/8/1893

Frederick Carpenter	
M. E. Froneberger	4/9/1893

Larken Pasour	
L. P. Fronebarger	4/24/1894

Polie Carpenter	
Susie Beam	4/14/1898

BURIALS BEFORE 1900

[Compiled from Bethel Lutheran Churchbook I]

	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Place of Burial</u>
Cora L. Kiser	9/6/1892	7 yrs. 2 mos. 16 days	Bethel Church
Barbara Carpenter	7/2/1892	72 yrs. 7 mos. 14 days	Kiser Graveyard
Philip Kiser	2/28/1893	84 yrs. 0 mos. 17 days	Bethel
Sarah McBee	8/17/1893	83 yrs.	Landers Chapel
Anna Alexander	7/8/1894	70 yrs. 11 mos. 27 days	Landers Chapel
Mary Ora Bell Friday	7/25/1894	2 yrs. 8 mos. 10 days	Bethel
Hannah Pasour	8/16/1894	77 yrs. 4 mos. 29 days	Concord
Fannie E. Arp	9/1/1894	26 yrs. 10 mos. 3 days	Friday G. Yard
Alsie T. Senter	10/13/1894	2 yrs. 9 mos. 9 days	Bethel
Infant Child of			
C. S. Carpenter		Born Dead	Bethel
Lewis Dayton Carpenter	3/5/1895	1 mo. 14 days	Bethel
Luther Napoleon Carpenter	1/27/1896	10 days	Bethel
Kelly Besch Carpenter	2/13/1896	9 mos. 7 days	Bethel
Christina Carpenter Eaker	7/20/1896	58 yrs. 3 mos. 7 days	Bethel
Frances E. Carpenter	11/5/1897	54 yrs. 2 mos. 3 days	Bethel
Epsy Ernaranda Thornburg	11/24/1897	53 yrs. 2 mos. 24 days	Bethel
Eli Rudisill	11/25/1897	68 yrs. 3 mos. 27 days	Bethel
Minnie Summey	1/5/1898	27 yrs. 8 mos. 14 days	Bethel
Nancy Summey	5/5/1898		Bethel
Catharine Carpenter	9/2/1898	81 yrs. 6 mos. 16 days	Bethel
Daniel Shuford Summey	8/20/1898	7 mos.	Bethel
Manuel Carpenter	9/9/1898	88 yrs. 4 mos. 17 days	Bethel
Frederick Gotthelf Carpenter	11/3/1899	16 days	Bethel

PLEDGES FOR PASTOR'S SALARY

[This loose paper was a list of pledges for the salary of Rev. Jonas M. Senter.
It was found in papers owned by Mrs. Wade Carpenter Sr. of Rt. 6, Lincolnton]

Bethel Church 1905

Gaston Co. N.C. March the 1st

We the under sind promise to pay this amount next to our names for pastor's
salary.

M. L. Carpenter	5.50
J. H. Carpenter	5.50
P. S. Carpenter	5.00
John Kiser	2.00
J. B. Summey	2.50
Loy Carpenter	1.00
Martin Carpenter	1.00
Hiram Kiser	1.50
J. E. Carpenter	2.00
Mrs. Lafayette Carpenter	1.25
W. E. Kiser	1.00
L. H. Kiser	2.00
J. S. Carpenter	5.50
Candas Mauney	5.00
W. A. Mauney	5.00
A. L. Kiser	1.00
Fannie Pasour	1.25
J. A. Summey	3.00
Cleveland Carpenter	1.00
Marcus Carpenter	??
?M. E. Kiser	??
Margaret Carpenter	2.00

PLEDGES FOR PARSONAGE

[This paper included a list of pledges toward the parsonage which was built in Crouse in 1912 or 1913. It was found in papers owned by Mrs. Wade Carpenter Sr. of Rt. 6, Lincolnton.]

Bethel Church

Gaston County

N. C.

We the undersigned members and friends of Bethel E. L. Church promise to pay the amount below subscribed for parsonage at Crouse

<u>Names</u>	
John F. Carpenter	9.00
Dulcinia Carpenter	1.20
Ve Carpenter	1.20
Elmina Lee Carpenter	1.20
John E. Carpenter	6.00
Leonia Carpenter	1.20
M A Carpenter	6.00
Josephine Carpenter	1.20
Loy Carpenter	3.00
Lucy Bryte Carpenter	1.00
Mr. & Mrs. W. A. Mauney	15.00
Ransom Carpenter	1.00
Macus Carpenter	1.00
Jack Kiser	1.00
J. D. Froneberger	7.00
Candes Lynch	3.00
Martin L. Carpenter	4.00
Mrs. Lizzie Carpenter	1.00
L. H. Kiser	2.00
M. L. Kiser	6.00
Sallie Kiser	1.20
W. E. Kiser	3.00
H. L. Kiser	4.00
Ella Kiser	3.50

Anderson Kiser	1.00
Doctor Kiser	1.00
Augustus Kiser	1.00
Samuel Kiser	1.00
H. Sidney Kiser	10.00
M. G. Carpenter	5.00
Mrs. Ella Carpenter	2.00
D. H. Harmon	6.00
B. A. Harmon	1.20
Jacob	1.20
Columbus	1.20
J. A. Kiser	3.00
Zula B. Kiser	1.20
Frances Kiser	1.20
Monrow Rhyne	1.00
Mrs. H. E. Hager	1.00
Mrs. P. S. Kiser	5.00
Larkin Pasour	4.00
J. F. Kiser	2.00
L. A. Kiser	1.20
Hiram Kiser	1.50
Joshet Sego	1.50
P. S. Carpenter	5.00
M. S. Pasour	4.00

CHURCH DONATIONS FOR SHINGLES

[The following is listed in Bethel Churchbook I]

Bethel Church was covered with tin shingles in March 1935. Contributions as follows:

Anderson Kiser	10.00	John Hager	5.00
Doc Kiser	5.00	Mrs. Ethel Lingerfelt	2.00
W. E. Kiser	5.00	Mrs. Inez Dellinger	2.00
A. M. Kiser	5.00	D. H. Harmon	2.00
O. L. Kiser	5.00	Walter Black	2.00
M. L. Kiser	5.00	Mrs. Beulah Friday	.50
Christy Kiser	5.00	Frank Best	2.00
S. O. Kiser	5.00	Russ Hastings	1.00
Mrs. J. A. Kiser	1.00	Fisher Huffman	1.00
J. C. Kiser	5.00	Loy Carpenter	5.00
E. D. Kiser	5.00	Martin Carpenter	5.00
L. S. Kiser	1.00	Lewis Carpenter	2.00
D. A. Kiser	5.00	G. H. Carpenter	2.00
Ella Kiser	2.00	John Jr. Carpenter	2.00
Fayte Kiser	1.00	R. A. Carpenter	2.00
P. A. Kiser	1.00	Paul Carpenter	2.00
P. G. Kiser	2.50	Spargo Carpenter	2.00
W. L. Carpenter	2.00	Carl G. Carpenter	5.00
P. S. Carpenter	1.00	Cletus Payseur	.25
W. S. Carpenter	2.00	F. P. Payseur	.50
L. S. Carpenter	2.00	M. S. Payseur	2.00
Miss Ella Carpenter	3.00	J. V. Rudisill	2.00
Miles Carpenter	1.50	Charles L. Rhyne	1.00
Mrs. Zelda Carpenter	1.00	O. B. Payseur	2.00
Walter Carpenter	10.00	Mrs. M. E. Hagar	1.00
W. R. Carpenter	5.00	E. S. Harmon	2.00
Mrs. Candace Lynch	1.00	Mrs. Alice K. Rhyne	2.50

Mrs. Will Payseur	1.00	Samuel Payseur	5.00
Mrs. F. F. Allen	1.00	R. W. Clippard	.50
Mrs. R. W. Clippard	1.00	Jessie Huss	3.00
W. F. Best	5.00	J. T. Uren	2.00
Mrs. Ida Huss	1.00	Miller Payseur	2.00
Mrs. Callie Rudisill	.50	Mrs. E. G. Rudisill	1.00
S. F. Stoupe	1.00	E. S. Harmon	2.00
E. G. Rudisill	1.00		

BETHEL CHURCH--BUILDING FUND

Remodeled Church

[The following loose typed papers were found in Bethel Churchbook I. It records the church remodeling of 1942.]

Paid In:

Ella Kiser	\$300.00
Dave Froneberger's Family	56.00
Mrs. Nancy Kiser	5.00
John Kiser	5.00
P. Anderson Kiser	1.00
Webb Clippard	100.00
Luther Kiser	5.00
D. Luther Costner	10.00
M. L. Kiser's Family	100.00
Mrs. Ella Reed	5.00
Carl and Bright Carpenter	54.00
John Hager	54.00
Clyde Carpenter	20.00
Charles Rhyne	1.00
Mrs. E. G. Rudisill	1.00
Ed Harmon	15.00
H. S. Kiser's Family and R. D. Lingerfeldt's Family	200.00
R. G. Kiser	25.00
Forest and Inez Dellinger	50.00
Fred Kiser	25.00
P. S. Carpenter's Family	54.00
W. E. Kiser	100.00
L. Anderson Kiser	100.00
A. M. Kiser	100.00
John Uren's Family	<u>55.00</u>
	<u>\$1441.00</u>
Frank Pauseur's Family	\$ 54.00
Clarence Kiser	15.00
Sylvanus Payseur's Family	54.00
Loy Carpenter's Family	80.00

Mrs. Sylvanus Payseur	5.00
Mrs. Ellen Payseur	5.00
Elex Carpetner's Family	56.00
Spargo Carpenter's Family	54.00
Martin Carpenter's Family	54.00
P. S. Carpenter	5.00
George and Mable Neal	54.00
Claudieth Payseur	10.00
Martin Carpenter	20.00
C. A. Rudisill	54.00
W. A. Mauney	625.00
Hiram Kiser's Family	33.50
Peter L. Hastings's Family	54.00
S. O. Kiser	54.00
Louise Kiser	18.00
D. C. Kiser	100.00
Ed Kiser	5.00
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hallman	50.00
Mrs. N. K. Reed	10.00
Mrs. Ruben Brown	10.00
	\$ 1479.50

Mrs. Christy Kiser	\$ 27.00
Mrs. W. A. Mauney	50.00
Mrs. Frank R. Summers	10.00
Mrs. J. E. Herndon	5.00
D. A. Kiser	100.00
Collie Tutherow	2.00
Author Summey	3.00
Rev. Roy Fisher	5.00
Willard Best	50.00
Mrs. Will Carpenter	10.00
Mrs. Forest Allen	5.00
Hugh Carpenter	10.00

(Paid in)

John Carpenter's Family	54.00	
Sold 18 windows	17.75	
Sold one water cooler	1.00	TOTAL PAID IN
Sold 24 pews @ \$6.50 each	156.00	
Sold one pulpet	12.00	\$1441.00
	<u>\$517.75</u>	1479.50
Willard and Frank Best	50.00	<u>517.75</u>
Luther Kiser Paid	3.00	\$3438.25
W. E. Kiser John Hagar Lights Paid	101.74	<u>50.00</u>
Memorial Window	175.00	\$3488.25
Total	<u>\$279.74</u>	<u>279.74</u>
		\$3767.99 Collected
		<u>3595.20</u> Paid out
		In treasure \$172.79

PAID OUT ON CHURCH

Rods for steeple	\$ 2.50	
1 sack of cement	.80	
Door strip	.20	
Nails	.60	
22 Pews for church	1002.26	
W. R. Fite's work	97.78	
W. R. Fite's work	157.96	
W. R. Fite's work	153.75	
Material for church	446.32	
Sanding floor	92.00	Rubber for aisle 8.30
Oil for floor	17.00	Wax floor 15.00
W. R. Fite's time	15.00	Plate 115.00
Covering roof	260.00	Express 1.45
Cornwell Painting church	451.25	mat at door 1.25
Windows	330.04	John Hager and
Work putting in windows	90.00	W. E. Kiser Lights
5% on work	60.00	101.74
	<u>\$3177.46</u>	Memoriel Window <u>175.00</u>
		Total Paidout \$3595.20

CHURCH PEW DONATIONS

[The following inscription is located on the plaque in the church. It was placed there after the remodeling of the church in 1942.]

The Pews in this Church Were Given in Honor or in Memory of the Following
William C. Best & wife Mary E. Best, by Children
John E. Carpenter & wife Mattie Leona Carpenter, by Children
P. Sylvannus Carpenter & wife Rebecca M. Carpenter, by Children
James S. Carpenter & wife Venia Carpenter, by Carl O. Carpenter, Eva B. Carpenter
Michael A. Carpenter & wife Josephine Carpenter, by Children
Mrs. Emma Lee Carpenter, by Family
J. M. Luther Carpenter & wife M. Caroline Carpenter, by Mr. & Mrs. John Hager
Martin Luther Carpenter & wife Violet Elizabeth Carpenter, by Children
Callie S. Clippard, by Husband
J. David Lewis Froneberger & wife Sarah E. Froneberger, by Children
Peter L. Hastings & wife Ida Louise Hastings, by Children
Infant Daughter & Infant Son, by Mr. & Mrs. Paul Hallman
Hiram Kiser & wife Sarah Ann Kiser, by Children
John Phillip Kiser & wife Margaret E. Kiser, by Family
Michael L. Kiser & wife Sallie A. Kiser, by Children
Hiram Sidney Kiser & wife Lillian Angeline Kiser, by Children
William Edward Kiser & wife Ocie Mae Kiser, by Family
Christy Kiser & wife Sallie Drusilla Kiser
Kenneth Ralph Neal, by Mr. & Mrs. Geo. C. Neal, Jr.
Frank P. Paysour & wife Emma Isabella Paysour, by Children
Marion Sylvannus Paysour & wife Mary Jane Paysour, by Children
John Thomas Uren & wife Josephine Uren, by Children

PLEDGES ON PARISH HOUSE

[This loose paper listed pledges on the Parish House probably made during 1951.
It was located in the Bethel Churchbook I.]

Mr. & Mrs. Forrest Dellinger pd.	\$100.00
Mr. & Mrs. J. E. Carpenter, Jr. pd.	\$100.00
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Carpenter pd.	\$100.00
Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Kiser pd.	\$100.00
Mr. & Mrs. John Hager pd.	100.00
Miss Ella Kiser pd.	100.00
Mr. & Mrs. Forrest Allen, Jr. pd.	100.00
Mr. & Mrs. P. L. Kiser pd.	60.00
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Kiser pd.	50.00
Mr. & Mrs. Dock Kiser pd.	60.00
Mr. & Mrs. A. M. Kiser pd.	50.00
Mr. & Mrs. Anderson Kiser	50.00
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Mitchem pd.	50.00
Mr. & Mrs. Wade Carpenter pd.	35.00
Mr. & Mrs. R. G. Kiser pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. Calvin Hovis pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. S. O. Kiser pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Kiser pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Clark pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Kiser pd.	100.00
Mr. & Mrs. Loy Carpenter, Jr. pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. F. F. Allen pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. E. S. Harmon pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. Grady Caldwell pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. Spargo Carpenter pd.	25.00
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Best pd.	60.00
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Moretz pd.	20.00
Luther A. Kiser pd.	10.00

Avery Kiser pd.	5.00
Mrs. Sallie Kiser pd.	5.00
Mr. & Mrs. Earl Payseur pd.	50.00
Mr. & Mrs. Claude Carpenter	20.00
Mr. & Mrs. Everette Carpenter	25.00 pd.
Mrs. Will Carpenter	5.00 pd.
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis McAllister	25.00 pd.
Mr. & Mrs. George Neal	
Miss Sue Kiser	
Hinson Kiser	
Mrs. Sid Kiser	10.00 pd.
Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Kiser	10.00 pd.
Mr. & Mrs. Miller Payseur	50.00 paid
Bayne Harmon	5.00 pd
Mr. & Mrs. Loy Carpenter, Sr.	20.00 paid
General Donations	13.50 paid

DONATIONS TOWARD THE PARISH HOUSE

[This data was obtained from a church bulletin located at Bethel Church dated December 21, 1952.]

We are happy to have Dr. and Mrs. F. L. Conrad, D.D., with us on this occasion of the Dedication of the Parish House.

It was in November 1950 that the Women of the Church Group 2 decided to sponsor the Building of a Parish House. The first Special Offering for this cause was Christmas 1950. The first meeting in the Parish House [was] the February meeting of Group 2, 1952.

The cost of the Parish House and equipment in money and gifts in kind is approximately \$6,000.

Much credit for the Building, and the raising of Funds is due Mr. Forrest Allen, Jr. and his building committee.

The Building Committee:

Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Allen, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. John Carpenter

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Carpenter

Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Dellinger

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Kiser

The congregation was fortunate to have Mr. Daniel Mitchem, a member of the congregation, as contractor in charge of the Building.

Space does not permit names and amounts of gifts and offerings to be recorded here. They are a matter of record, and every gift great and small is deeply appreciated.

Some of the Special gifts as recorded by the committee are listed below:

Gas Stove - Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kiser

Dishes, Pots, Pans, Silverware - Groups 1 and 2 of the Women of the Church and the Luther League

Bath Room Fixtures - Miss Ella Kiser, Lewis Kiser, Gus Kiser, Ralph Kiser and John Carpenter

Digging of Septic Tank, Drying Field and Water Lines - Forrest Allen, Jr.

A New Electric Refrigerator - Miss Ella Kiser

Painting Parish House - Sam Kiser, Sammy and Herman Kiser

Kitchen Sink - Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Dellinger

Hot Water Heater - M. A. Carpenter Family

Tables - Mr. and Mrs. John Mitchem

Silverware - Mrs. Margaret Mitchem Harmon and her brother Clyde Mitchem

Pipe and Paint - by the John Mitchem Family

Linoleum for the Kitchen - Luther League

Linoleum for the Bathroom - The Sunday School

Finishing Floors - Group 2 Women of Church

BETHEL'S BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

[Written by Diane K. Carpenter]

In celebration of its bicentennial Bethel scheduled a year of monthly mini-celebrations. Beginning in November, 1989, the congregation commemorated Thanksgiving with a "Scratch Covered Dish Meal." All the foods were prepared "from scratch" much as our forefathers' meals. Christmas brought an old-fashioned theme as the church's Christmon tree was decorated with handmade ornaments provided by the Sunday School Classes. The Christmas program was reminiscent of pageants of years ago. In January an "Old Service Sunday" enlightened the congregation in the type of worship service Bethel's founding fathers may have used. February's "Old Hymn Sing" brought back many memories for the older members and some of the congregation really became a part of the celebration by dressing in clothing like that of our ancestors. The Lenten season presented an opportunity to help a fellow church. During a self-denial program money was collected and then contributed to Gloria Dei Mission Church in Gastonia. Easter service was held at 8 AM and followed by a breakfast. The breakfast's fellowship and good food were enjoyed by about 75 hungry people. May's "Children Day" was a success despite a sudden downpour of rain. Service was held outdoors under the roof of the new church and was followed by hamburgers, hotdogs, homemade ice cream, volleyball, kite flying, bubble blowing, and square dancing. Former Pastor Walter Yount graced our pulpit during June. Amy Carpenter graciously prepared a commemorative video celebrating Bethel's rich heritage which the congregation anxiously viewed in July. The climax of Bethel's bicentennial celebration was Homecoming, August 12, 1990. Bishop McDaniel honored Bethel with his presence and blessed them with his message. An afternoon of activities followed the wonderful homecoming meal.

Celebration Committee Members:

Hub Sellers, Chairman
Annie Lee Payseur
Diane K. Carpenter
Robert C. Carpenter



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